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# RENAISSANCE

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A Critical Journal  
of Letters



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# RENASCENCE

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# Four Quartets: Contemplatio Ad Amorem

By William T. Noon

T S. ELIOT'S *Four Quartets* may be said to dramatize one man's effort to make an act of perfect love of God. Seen in this light, the organization of the *Quartets* is reminiscent of the *Contemplation to Obtain Divine Love*, which is the crowning meditation of St. Ignatius of Loyola's little book, *The Spiritual Exercises*. One discovers several important themal correspondences between the two works, and it should help toward a better understanding of what Eliot is saying in the *Quartets* to consider what these correspondences are.

It is impossible to assert that Eliot did not know rather well Loyola's *Exercises*. In his essay, *The Modern Mind*, Eliot contrasts them intelligently with I. A. Richards' *Mencius on the Mind*. It would be difficult to establish any Ignatian "influence" upon Eliot's poems. Loyola and Eliot alike depend upon the great medieval tradition of mysticism. Loyola, the acknowledged heir of this centuries-old tradition, proposed to do no more in the *Contemplatio* than schematically to organize a familiar "method of prayer." In Eliot's case, an indebtedness to Dante, to the English mystics, and to St. John of the Cross outweighs, it would seem, any possible dependence upon Loyola's *Contemplatio* as a "literary source." The ontogeny of the *vita contemplativa*, though it finds expression at one time in a Loyola, at another time in an Eliot, may be quite independent, in such cases, of one writer's using another writer's work as his literary source.

Between Loyola's work and Eliot's, there is, to begin with, a fundamental difference of intention. St. Ignatius is proposing a "method" of prayer: his *Contemplatio ad Amorem* is, in no strict sense, poetry. The presentation is abstract, the style is skeletal, the language condensed and prosaic. The "matter" is divided logically into four "points," and the progression of thought is barely suggested within a rigid economy of statement. Effective presentation of this "contemplation" by a speaker or writer requires considerable familiarity with the oral tradition of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which are from the literary point of view, hardly more than convenient epitomes or digests of important points for the spiritual health and welfare of an individual.

Furthermore, the point of view of Ignatius of Loyola is unqualifiedly a saint's point of view. Eliot does not choose to speak from so lofty a height in the *Four Quartets*. The dramatization of his effort to make an act of perfect

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love of God is poetically effective partly because of the ambiguity of thought and action of his "impersonalized" poetic sensibility, sensitive to the ambivalent positive-negative tension charges towards the supernatural that are typical of the modern sensibility and of the modern mind.

**G**RANTED these differences, it is still true that Loyola and Eliot are engaged in much the same endeavor. Each is trying to take the measurements of divine love. At the same time, each is aware of the Pauline insistence that God's love is measureless. But men are tempted to take its measurements, and tend always, in the view of Loyola and of Eliot, to make measurements too small. Love has its hierarchies: man can love God in the penitential spirit of love offended, or out of a spirit of gratitude, or of friendship. These loves are good but are not perfect. Perfect love aims at union with the divine goodness for His own sake, not ours.

Setting aside the question of possible literary dependence, a comparison of the themal organization of the *Four Quartets* with the four-fold themal organization of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* cannot fail to illuminate Eliot's poem. The sixteenth century Spanish saint and the modern English poet, in spite of all their differences, have often come along the same road together in their search for the love of God:

If you came this way,  
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,  
At any time or at any season,  
It would always be the same.

(Little Gidding, I)

Before beginning the *Contemplatio* proper, St. Ignatius prefixes two notes on the nature of love: 1. Love is shown more in deeds than in words. 2. Love consists in a mutual communication so that those who love give to one another what each possesses.

Eliot incorporates into the *Quartets* a poetic affirmation of the same two intuitions:

1.       These are only hints and guesses,  
          Hints followed by guesses; and the rest  
          Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.

(Dry Salvages, V)

2.       But to apprehend  
          The point of intersection of the timeless  
          With time, is an occupation for the saint—  
          No occupation either, but something given  
          And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,  
          Arduous and selflessness and self-surrender.

(Dry Salvages, V)

## FOUR QUARTETS

EACH of the four poems circles, as it were, around these two truths which coalesce at the center. We are not intended to view the four poems of Eliot, any more than the four "points" of the *Ad Amorem*, as each constituting a distinctly new and different advance. The movement is circular, rather than rectilinear. All of the major themes are to be found in all four of the *Quartets*. We circle about the same intuitions with an ever-narrowing and tightening radius. The four poems of Eliot, like the four "points" of Ignatius, are really only four modalities, four *approfondissements* or fathomings of the same truths: the fusion of time and eternity, the rehabilitation of history, the union of man with God in the act of charity, the earthly exile's search for the way to his eternal home.

Eliot dramatizes the search by means of poetic images which fuse Heraclitean and Dantean symbols. The underlying themal correspondences between the four points of the *Contemplatio* and the *Four Quartets* may, nevertheless, be seen in the following translation of both point and symbol into more general themal terms:

POINT	SYMBOL	THEME
1. <i>Deus dona dans</i>	<i>Burnt Norton: Memory:</i>  Dust in <i>air</i> .	<i>Stillness:</i> within and without:  Time: present and past in time future as one.
2. <i>Deus in donis inhabitans</i>	<i>East Coker: Earth:</i>  the open field, succession of seasons, the body's rhythm—the life urge.	<i>Motion:</i> time extended into history: the eternal incarnate in time.  Love is the <i>alpha</i> and <i>omega</i> : God is the beginning and end. "In my beginning is my end"; "in my end is my beginning."
3. <i>Deus in donis operans</i>	<i>Dry Salvages: Water:</i>  the river and the sea, the life principle, the journey over water to the granite rock on the promontory.	<i>Motion in stillness:</i> invisible energy manifesting itself in incarnation: at the core of all activity is the permanent, erosion- less Rock: <i>Deus,</i> <i>arx mea et rupes</i> <i>mea.</i>

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### 4. *Deus, Amor Ipse*

*Little Gidding: Fire:*  
and the Rose:

the purgatorial  
fire of suffering,  
the saving fire of  
Divine Love:

the rose, "symbol  
perfected by death"  
—"The tongues of  
flame are in-folded"  
to form "the crowned  
knot of fire." "The  
fire and the rose are  
one."

*Stillness in Motion:*

*Union:* history  
rehabilitated—  
"A condition of  
complete simplicity  
costing not less  
than everything."

Love is surrender:  
the Ignatian  
oblation: *Sume et  
suscipe!*

THE purpose of St. Ignatius' first point is to aid the exercitant to remember all the gifts in the natural and the supernatural orders which he has received from God, and thus to awaken in him the desire, out of gratitude, to love God better in return. *Burnt Norton*, to be sure, has not this frankly ascetical orientation. Still, memory is the mental faculty that controls the dramatic situation at the pool, and posits the central paradox of the *Four Quartets*:

To be conscious is not to be in time  
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,  
The moment in the arbour where the train beat,  
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall  
Be remembered; involved with past and future.  
Only through time time is conquered.

(*Burnt Norton*, II)

All of *Burnt Norton* is an effort of memory to proceed beyond desire for the gifts that the past has bestowed to the giver of the gifts. "The figure of the ten stairs," towards the end, is a traditional symbol for the discipline of contemplation, one that evokes St. Bernard, St. John of the Cross, and the English meditative poets, Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan. The stillness of the Chinese jar, "the stillness of the violin while the note lasts" symbolize memory's search for meaning at the still point, where there is neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,  
... Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance ...

(*Burnt Norton*, II)

The search for meaning in the sunlight, in the hidden laughter of the children, in all life's changing pattern brings the poet to the point where he affirms

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that the giver is alone unchanging: "Love is itself unmoving." *Burnt Norton* ends, then, as does St. Ignatius' first point, in the presence of God as Love. "Da, domine, quod iubes et iube quod vis" (St. Augustine).

THE second point of the *Ad Amorem* directs the exercitant to consider how God dwells in all His gifts, and how we may find Him everywhere. The effort of the second point is not so much an exercise of the memory as of the intelligence, the understanding: What does it mean to say, "God is everywhere"?

If I take up the wings of the dawn,  
If I dwell at the end of the sea:  
Even there thy hand will guide me,  
And thy right hand hold me fast.

(Ps. 138)

As John Bradbury has already pointed out, the doctrine stressed in *East Coker* is Incarnation. The dominant image is earth, but as the poem progresses, the earth is considered less as a physical principle of renewal and decay, more in its anagogical aspect as a symbol of the presence of the eternal in time. Paradoxically, the earth reveals as well as conceals the presence of God:

Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth  
Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,  
Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf . . .

(East Coker, I)

are the *données* of the poem's opening. But man is not bound to this cyclic pattern of purposeless change. There is stillness as well as motion; there is the paternal presence

That will not leave us, but prevents us  
everywhere.

(East Coker, IV)

The poem's development is partly an effort "for a further union, a deeper communion" with this presence, the presence that both *checks* and *guides*:

Love is most nearly itself  
When here and now cease to matter.

(East Coker, V)

A man finds God in all things only by searching for Him, and for Eliot as for Ignatius, the search postulates heroic detachment:

In order to possess what you do not possess  
You must go by the way of dispossession.

(East Coker, III)

But detachment (renunciation) is painful. Docility to God is hard. Love alone can insure docility. In the last analysis, love is a grace, a gift of God:

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For us, there is only the trying. The rest is  
not our business.  
Home is where one starts from.

(East Coker, V)

Again, Eliot like Ignatius has circled back to the Augustinian wisdom: *Ut ames Deum, habitat in te Deus, et amat Se de te.*

THE difference between point two and point three of the *Ad Amorem* is a delicate one. In the second point, as we have seen, St. Ignatius directs the exercitant to consider God's presence in all things. In the third point, he wishes him to fathom this mystery still further: the very presence of God is an active presence, for God concurs, collaborates, cooperates with creatures in all their activity. God is present in all things not just for man's contemplation and reverence, but He works through all things, guides all His creatures to their appointed ends. It is for men, then, to collaborate, act in concert with Him. "Lord, Thy broken consort raise, / And the music shall be praise" was George Herbert's expression of this idea. I have tried to suggest the quality of this point by calling it *motion in stillness*.

This description suggests as well the distinctive quality of the third *Quartet, Dry Salvages*. This third poem opens with two motion images, the river and the sea. The themal development is carried out in terms of this kind of motion that is associated with stillness: the tolling bell, the ground swell, the "sleepy rhythm" of the train,

The silent withering of autumn flowers  
Dropping their petals and remaining motionless.

(*Dry Salvages, II*)

The purgatorial detachment from self and from things and from persons is brought progressively to a focus by suggesting the transforming power of the Incarnation. Detachment is possible only in terms of attachment to something else, or more exactly, to *Someone* else. The great point of intersection between the temporal and the eternal is the moment of the entry of God into history:

Here the impossible union  
Of sphere of existence is actual,  
Here the past and the future  
Are conquered, and reconciled.

(*Dry Salvages, V*)

The motion images have all been brought to the stillness of the granite, erosionless rock. Now the rock image dissolves in the contemplation of persons, the Lady, Queen of Heaven, and by inescapable implication, her Son. The stillness is no longer static. The poem ends on an invitation to action:

And right action is freedom  
From past and future also.

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For most of us, this is the aim  
Never here to be realized;  
Who are only undefeated  
Because we have gone on trying.

(*Dry Salvages, V*)

THE fourth point of the *Ad Amorem* qualitatively transcends the three preceding ones. Here the exercitant makes a great mental leap toward the center in his consideration of the love of God. He passes from a consideration of God's goodness as it is manifested in the created, temporal world, to a contemplation of God's goodness in Himself. God is good infinitely, not only in our regard, but in Himself essentially. God is more beautiful than all the world—by the margin of infinity! All good comes from God as a ray from the sun, as water from its source, but the ray does not exhaust the light of the sun, nor does flowing water exhaust its source. God is an artist incomparable, whose works at their loveliest are but finite copies of an infinite, transcendent beauty.

The purpose of St. Ignatius' fourth point, so strategically prepared for, is to lead on the exercitant to make an act of perfect love of God,—a love that is motivated no longer by a consideration of His goodness to us, but a love rooted in the awareness of how infinitely loveable God is in Himself. St. John of the Cross has expressed the same truth poetically: "At eventide they will examine thee in love."

*Little Gidding* reveals this same quality of "stillness in motion," and is a preparation in the temporal moment for the final examination in love. Elizabeth Drew has wisely shown how fire is the master-element of the fourth *Quartet*. The image previously introduced as a symbol of destruction and purification now functions at two further levels: illumination, and (at the close) as a symbol of Divine Love itself. *Little Gidding* is thus truly a Pentecostal poem: "the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

The fourth *Quartet* opens in a garden radiant with the promise of early springtime loveliness:

Between melting and freezing  
The soul's sap quivers.

(*Little Gidding, I*)

Midway between the winter and the spring, there is renewal of life, the first pledge of the harvest:

This is the spring time  
But not in time's covenant.

(*Little Gidding, I*)

The covenant of spring with winter is symbolized in temporal dimensions

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by the blossoms of snow-bloom on the branches. But snow-blossoms are transitory, so what must the full reconciliation of time's opposites be?

Where is the summer, the unimaginable  
Zero summer?

(*Little Gidding, I*)

How does man, inextricably involved in time, enter into a covenant beyond time's dimensions? Not by thought processes, not by reasoning, not simply by willing it! Loyola the saint and Eliot the poet are both too perceptive of the difficulties inherent in the human situation to propose an easy solution. Here their response is identical:

You are not here to verify,  
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity  
Or carry report. You are here to knell  
Where prayer has been valid.

(*Little Gidding, I*)

THE progression of the last *Quartet* is a re-ordering of all the themes so as to bring out their latent implications in the final synthesis that is the act of perfect love. The post air-raid encounter with the stranger "in the uncertain hour before the morning" is curiously evocative of the disciples' meeting with Christ as stranger on their way to Emmaus in the twilight of the first Easter Sunday evening:

Was it not to be expected that the Christ  
should undergo these sufferings, and enter  
so into His glory?

(*Luke 24:26*)

Love is not possible for the man who is not prepared to suffer. In the words of the anonymous author of the fourteenth century mystical work, *The Cloud of Unknown*:

Renunciation and humility will at the last  
help thee to knit a ghostly knot of  
burning love betwixt thee and thy God in  
ghostly one head.

The fire symbol fuses at the end with the rose symbol, which has always been in Christian tradition the symbol of love, love as beauty, "mystical rose." (Is not "the rosary" a circlet of prayer?) The effort of the memory to rehabilitate history, the effort of the intelligence to accept the consequences of the Incarnation, the effort to infuse new life into poetic speech all simultaneously come to a successful (but delicately precarious) resolution in this final acceptance of God as Love. The "condition of complete simplicity" costs "not

(Continued on page 29)



# Léon Bloy: Imperfect Splendor

BY STANISLAS FUMET

**B**LOY was a most astonishing writer in his generation. His style alone, which has been imitated widely, should have been enough to assure him of a prominent place in manuals of literature. However, he does not have a place in any of them. One thinks inevitably of those histories of painting where no mention is made of Tintoretto or of El Greco. For Bloy wrote as these men painted: a skilled page by Bloy is the equivalent of a canvas by either of these two. It is curious that technique is slighted in professional manuals and most other works that critics write. Yet one must insist upon technique in the case of Léon Bloy — not merely because he was a creator of unheard of sentences, but because his real thought is not easily approachable. Nor is it extravagant to suggest that this message is not for everybody. His words must be read closely.

Now, nearly forty years after his death, Léon Bloy is no longer the little known writer that he was during his lifetime. "I am the unsellable author," he used to say. It is worth pondering that a doctoral thesis, *La pensée religieuse de Léon Bloy*, was recently accepted by the Sorbonne. The young author-professor exercised his ingenuity to excuse this great Catholic writer for having answered passionately and imprudently the calls of his being. Yet, if effort be expended to suppress Bloy's originality, this moral and intellectual imperfection from which the splendor of his work emerges, what is left of Léon Bloy? The catechism will do. Still, this thesis has won its author the title of *docteur-ès-lettres*. Should we not weep a little for the pilgrim of the absolute?

Such a destiny is strange for such a writer. During his lifetime the *Nouvelle Revue Française* was apparently unaware of his existence. But his name has been coming up for more than a half-century, not only among artists and in certain circles of the ecclesiastical world, but also among members of *la haute société*. And the *Dublin Review* has just afforded him considerable space. He has always had his "fans" and admirers, the latter being on firmer ground. Disregarding the culpable silence of André Gide, who gave Léon Bloy his proper due in private, and in spite of the silence of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, it has still been a long time since Bloy's talent has been weighed. A long time — even if it be allowed that his charged writing is no longer stylish, that his passion, his vehemence, his indignations appear to belong to a prehistoric world. So cold have we grown during the past fifty years.

But events have now lent to this writer a timeliness that it would be blind to refuse after what has been seen in Germany, Poland, and Russia during the

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past few years. It is important to remember this: Léon Bloy was one of the conquered of 1870; after 1918 the French were the conquerors who soiled their laurels. Now we can understand the reason for Léon Bloy's anger. After the disgrace of World War II, we feel ourselves closer to him than we did in the years immediately after his death. Bloy and Péguy are the French writers who have been our prophets. But Péguy had not seen 1870; Péguy had not been beaten in 1871, like Bloy, who had just found God during the war he had waged as a sniper. Now we are beginning to understand that war leaves its mark on men. Péguy was in the struggle of 1914, which he did not survive. Bloy was in the preceding war, and he was in it at the age of twenty-five, at the time when the mind arrives. Herein is the great difference between the generations of Bloy and Péguy. Bloy lived with a crepe around his heart, and he died, his large heart exhausted, before the armistice of 1918, in the tiny house of Bourg-la-Reine that Péguy had left to seek out death three years before at Villercy.

LÉON BLOY'S destiny as a writer was extremely painful, and it was entirely bound to a spiritual mission that his contemporaries could not appraise and that was, in reality, essentially abnormal. He was a sort of a seer who was not deceived about the absolute, who, in sum, was not "lost" although he could be greatly mistaken about people. Torn by injustice and cudgelled by an excessive poverty, his passion for the absolute had deprived him of the sense of measure. He refused the middle path on every occasion. He condemned mediocrity, even when it might be acceptable, because it was lukewarm. So, for him, a man could be worth only a glorification or a malediction. For this primitive Christian, the only dwellings were in Heaven or Hell. For this artist, no bridge appeared thrown between Heaven and Hell. His religion was a struggle without quarter. His compassion and his sense of justice found embrace only in the absolute, in his God.

"Monsieur Bloy," somebody said to him, "you, you walk only in the absolute!"

"What do you want me to walk in?" answered this sublime eschatologist.

LET it be repeated that Bloy admitted only extremes. He is the one who wrote that there are for woman, "a temporarily, provisorily inferior creature, only two aspects, two essential modalities with which it is indispensable that the Infinite should accommodate itself: Blessedness or Voluptuousness. Between the two, there is only the decent woman, the middle-class wife, the mate of the middle-class man who is absolutely reprovén and whom no holocaust redeems."

Such is his manner and such is his tone. The *bourgeois* does not have any place in his church. The *bourgeois* is the reprovén one. He is the enemy of

## LÉON BLOY

beauty, grandeur, nobility, love; in a word, of all that is disinterested. For Léon Bloy, above all others, it is to the *bourgeois* that the Apocalypse of Saint John alludes in this verdict: "Because you are lukewarm, I shall spew you out of my mouth."

Page after page of Léon Bloy is given to the man who repulses. He, the man who has no time for the Ideal, is an enraging entity for Monsieur Bloy, who knows where he wishes to walk. His ire is without end for those "whose stomach is on high and whose heart is below." He goes so far as to record the curtailed number of formulae which the *bourgeois* employs to express the totality of his wisdom: these are the *commonplaces* for which Bloy constructed the exegesis.

NOW there would be grave error in thinking that Bloy was assuaging personal rancors when he lashed, with an unequalled vigor, at the undulating mass of humanity which he knew as his fellow men. He himself was convinced, and this a part of his mystery, that, when he massacred his contemporaries, he was the "consignee of vengeance and the very obedient servant of a strange fury" which commanded him to speak. He was sure — and he had reasons upon which he relied completely — that God was using him to accomplish extraordinary designs. He was certain that he had become a writer only by accident. He felt that he had taken up his pen through a series of circumstances which he himself considered mysterious. Also, although scant attention has been paid to the depth of Bloy's life, it may be pointed out that ten years of these circumstances (1879-1889) were assuredly quite frightful. The man who wove his life into *Le désespéré* could not be reduced to the likeness of either a vulgar journalist or a benign man of letters. He was, let it be said again, a seer, or, more exactly, a demi-seer. He recognized his own portrait in the man born blind of the Gospel. He was a contemplator who did not find his way in letters.

BLOY is neither historian nor novelist nor even a pamphleteer without being a poet. It is this which gives accent to his slightest writing, to the most desperate sentence in his *Journal* or *Correspondence*. This is likewise the source of much of his sumptuousness, of so many nuances in the brilliance of his style. However, the poet cannot be dissociated from the man of contemplation, from the man of prayer.

Léon Bloy has been misjudged each time that he has been judged outside the spiritual perspective. No writer was a more fervent or a more regular Catholic than he. It has not been properly weighed that the *Histoires désobligeantes*, which appeared in *Gil Blas* and which might be taken for rascalities or sadistic incongruities, were most often written after Mass. Bloy went to

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Communion each morning. These infernal stories are best considered as apologies—or "mystic moralities."

In his time, there were only his intimates and his friends to know almost who he was. In his last years he was a way to the Church. People discovered this poor man's books, came to him, grew attached to him as he was — so loving, so tender, so timid, so unarmed, so calumniated — with sentiments that the more cultivated men of letters would not have inspired. In his youth he had had friends, but he had most often quarreled with them: his master, Barbey d'Aurevilly; Blanc de Saint-Bonnet; Paul Féval; Gabriel Hanotaux; Paul Bourget, the Dulaurier of the *Désespéré*; his brother in spirit, Ernest Hello, and his companions in misfortune and art, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Huysmans, Rollinat, and the Swiss Montchal (the Georges Leverdier of the same *Désespéré*). He had been in correspondence with Gobineau; he had visited Coppée; Verlaine had sung his praises; he had even had Richepin for a comrade, and then there was Jehan Rictus, whom he designated as "the last Catholic poet" and of whom he made one of the *Dernières Colonnes de l'Eglise*. He was one of the great men of the *Mercur de France*. Vallett never abandoned him. Rachilde admired him wildly. Mirabeau praised him after the publication of *La Femme Pauvre*; Maeterlinck wrote him a letter in which he placed him on a level with Shakespeare! His liking for Henri de Groux, the painter, was particularly demonstrative. But it was at the end of his life that Léon Bloy had friends who shared more in his spiritual intimacy. The great geologist, Pierre Termier — whom God had called Termier, Bloy used to say, so that he might pay his "terme" (this nightmare of the poor) — worshipped him. Finally, he has celebrated godchildren who, in France, in Holland, and, across the frontiers and the seas, have followed this conquering action in favor of a Christianity that is a sharing. The most celebrated is Jacques Maritain.

The works of Léon Bloy have a marvelous apologetic power. How many, in their reading of *Le Désespéré* and *La Femme Pauvre*, of the whole sweep of the *Journal*, of the *Salut par les Juifs*, or of *Celle qui pleure*, have felt a breath which was not of the earth? How many have sensed, through these imprecations and these sighs, the beginning of a confidence of the Spirit which could indeed at the actual moment be revealed as prophetic?

He has been called very proud. This is a misunderstanding. Bloy sincerely believed in his mission. He saw well the effect that his words produced on others. He was deeply obliged to keep an accounting of the graces that God had given him. And what is sure beyond a doubt is that Léon Bloy had no moral consideration for himself. He judged himself with severity, as witnessed by these lines of *Méditations d'un Solitaire*, written towards the end of his life:

But you yourself, Léon Bloy, who mock the most honorable Christians, where are you? What is the quality of your prayer? Here it is:

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"I am going to the Eucharist, *Domine, non sum dignus* . . . Jesus is going to come and I have only a minute to prepare myself to receive Him . . .

"I do not remember that I have cleaned this house where He is going to enter as a king *or as thief*, for I do not know what to think of this visit. Have I ever cleaned it, my house of shamelessness and flesh?"

There exists another precious document on the real feeling of Léon Bloy facing himself, a letter to Jean de la Laurencie that has been published several times. It contains these sentences:

God had given me the sense, the need, the instinct — I don't know how to describe it exactly — for the Absolute, as he gave needles to the porcupine and a trunk to the elephant. Extremely rare gift that I have felt right from my childhood, a faculty more dangerous and more torturing than genius itself, since it implies the constant and furious appetite for what does not exist on earth, and since infinite isolation is obtained through it. I could have become a saint and a thaumaturge. I became a man of letters.

These pages that one wishes to admire, if one knew that they are the residue of a supernatural gift that I have spoiled odiously and for which I shall be asked to give a fearful accounting!

I have not done what God wished for me, this much is certain. I have dreamed, on the contrary, of *what I wanted from God*, and here I am at the age of sixty-eight, with nothing in my hands but paper.

**B**LOY lived miserably and poorly until his death in 1917, writing his beautiful books slowly, gradually winning faithful friends who had compassion on his troubles. He had at first thought that his vocation was different. It is only after the frightful disillusionments that were a horrible catastrophe in his life as a Christian, that he was precipitated, as he said, from an exclusively contemplative life. It was then that he fell into Parisian journalism and literature to the scandalized amusement of some and bewildered indignation of others, even to the astonishment of a few souls who were the only ones to guess Bloy's charity. They had let themselves be caught in His net.

Bloy has been reproached for his begging. He has even been called the "ungrateful beggar," wherein he took glory. The truth is that Léon Bloy, who did not understand it very well when he was not given what he needed, was the first to rid himself of the little that he might have on occasion. He was the most generous of men. This is what made him without pity for the avarice of those who had more than their share of this world's goods.

"Ah, the rich." His verve was inexhaustible against them. Scorn succeeded in his mouth to black anger, raillery found again the tone of the prophets of the Bible. It is in the name of poverty, of holy poverty, that he spoke to them, of this poverty that he knew as no one else did. It was a science with Bloy; he proposed a metaphysics of poverty that is entirely new. To this metaphysics is

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bound a sort of mystique of Money, the blood of the poor, that Péguy himself, who did not read Bloy but treated him as an "idiot," quite gratuitously did not glimpse. The rich man who does not give, is the one for Léon Bloy, who crucifies Money, who hinders the blood of the Poor Man, the blood of Christ, from circulating. This immense symbolism has prodigious consequences in the thought of Bloy. Money, which is the substance of the poor, is also the sign of wealth, and the existence of money constitutes the line of demarcation that the perverse world elevates between men who possess and those who do not possess, and who, in this way, are "possessed." The rich man "consumes money," the rich man consumes the poor man and in so doing, to use the expression of Saint Paul, the rich man consumes his own judgment.

What can one say, in addition to the incomparable soundings that he perpetrated in the mystery of the election of the Jewish people, predisposed to ignominy and glory, and of his violent denunciation of anti-Semitic nationalism which is a bleeding affront to the Mother of God?

In looking closely, one perceives that Bloy, if he was unable to be unjust, was so only by love of justice, for he wished too much of it. A passionate soul, endowed with a marked sensibility, what saved him was loving. Loving almost lost him. But loving also explains him. He wrote in 1885: "I am a slave to love, for sale to the first comer. If it is God who passes, I belong to God; if it is a creature, I belong to this creature, and, in spite of the fearful experiences of my life, the very grimace of love is still powerful enough to capture me. Now think if I have had to suffer."

A grief weighed on the soul of this Christian. He could not free himself from the fleshly side of things, even when God's promises were involved. And this difficulty was so organically inscribed in his nature as an artist that it took him an entire lifetime to succeed in divesting himself gradually of the exigences of the senses. Herein is his drama and its whole meaning, often repeated today, which he has left: "There is only one sadness . . . it's not to be with the saints."

Tr. SPIRE PITOU

# Poetry and Patrice de la Tour du Pin

By J. C. Reid

THE virtual disappearance from the modern community of once universally accepted symbols of unified belief has not only made impossible the production of traditional epic poetry, but it has forced the poet who seeks for breadth and universal meaning in a major work to replace the historic vision by the personal myth. A writer wishing to build a poem of "epic" scope must draw his symbols from his private experience, or use traditional symbols with a private significance, and in fact create his own myth, as Whitman attempted to do by merging himself with man, nature, and the universe. Yet such a myth, depending for its validity on the intensity and consistency of the poet's vision, is in danger of becoming the too-private myth or the self-conscious world of the aesthete, in which exploration of self is an end in itself, and not a means to a richer understanding of man. The major problem of writing a long poem today which has universal significance and also the "intimacy" which modern taste demands is how to combine in the same "myth" a traditional way of viewing reality with an awareness of those recent literary discoveries which express the particular impulses of the human spirit in our time. Such a task seems to call for a virtuosity and a power of synthesis almost beyond the capabilities of any one poet.

Yet Patrice de la Tour du Pin's *Une Somme de Poésie* has some claim to be regarded as the most successful modern effort on a large scale at re-integrating poetry and myth, and at creating a universe which, private in its experience, yet harmonizes universally true apprehensions with their contemporary manifestations.

LA TOUR du Pin, a member of one of the oldest of French aristocratic families, was born in Paris on March 16, 1911, and studied at Ste. Croix de Neuilly and the Ecole des Sciences Politiques. He was wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans on the Blier in 1939, and spent the next three years in a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany. He married his cousin, Anne, in 1943 and now has three daughters.

His first published work was *Enfants de Septembre* (1933) and during the thirties he published several additional portions of the work in progress, *Une Somme de Poésie*, which was issued complete in 1946. Today he lives in a nineteenth century castle, not far from Paris, which he has made a center for poets, writers, and thinkers, a fact which has some bearing on an under-

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standing of his *Somme*. In a short biographical statement in Matthew Hoehn's *Catholic Authors*, La Tour du Pin writes: "I have tried to do but one immense work in my whole life and am remaining faithful to this task now that I have arrived almost in the middle of Volume II. This desire for unity is not merely an artistic or architectural literary motive but a more profound desire to find as far as possible on this earth, the unity of myself before God and in God." And discussing the book which is to follow *Une Somme de Poésie*, he writes: "I think I must wait until I have finished, and must not let it appear in fragments. It is a long work which will take at least ten years more; and I need much patience; I hope the Lord will give it to me."

In *Une Somme de Poésie*, Patrice de la Tour du Pin has built a personal mythology on the basis of medieval-seeming legends. At times, the *Somme* suggests the plays of Anouilh and Cocteau in which Greek legends are played out in a modern setting. His characters have medieval names, they go on a quest like that of the Grail, and the landscape through which they move is redolent of the atmosphere of legend; yet, throughout, there is much immediate reference to contemporary life, and in places modern and medieval settings strangely blend. Central to his aim is the conception of the College of Tess, a monastic school of poets, from which the poets set out on journeys of spiritual exploration. "Notre base n'est pas la poésie, notre base est l'homme," writes Lorenquin, the first "abbot" of Tess—"nous ne cherchons pas à connaître la poésie, mais l'homme." Through the various poets, each representing a "way" of poetic expression innumerable fields of experience are explored, all, however, with the same end: to extend the knowledge of man of his mystery as well as his "reality."

The detached portions of the *Somme*—*La Quête de Joie*, *Les Psaumes* and *La Vie Recluse en Poésie*—published in the thirties, indicate the particular kind of exploration of the "monde privé" in which the poet was then engaged. It is not clear from the completed work just how much he was forced to modify his original purpose during the maturing years in which he worked on the *Somme*. What is obvious, however, is that his participation in the war and his captivity shattered the vision of the "dedicated life," or, perhaps it would be truer to say, made clearer the ideal for which he had been searching. What had been interim statements of the nature of the poetic process and of the aim of the poetic life, as set out in *La Vie Recluse en Poésie*, and modified later in the *Correspondance de Laurent de Cayeux*, came to be seen by La Tour du Pin as partly misdirected and certainly incomplete. The development of the poem indicates that, under the impact of war, the poet was shocked out of his secret world into the world of men, and learnt through suffering the fulness of his humanity. Tess, therefore, had to be destroyed; it had been outgrown. A new conception of the world



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of love is then enunciated, in which the roots of joy, love, adoration, and praise are found in simple everyday emotions and activities and in the love of his wife and baby daughter. As he makes clear in Book VII, La Tour du Pin worked on the *Somme* even during his time as a prisoner of war. The completed work indicates that, in fitting into the *Somme* the portions already written, he sowed in the earliest part hints of the destruction he was to bring to the dream in which, at the beginning, he was completely involved.

THROUGHOUT the *Somme* La Tour du Pin is concerned with the poetic vocation, with the finding of a dedicated way to live a life in poetry. The temptation is great to make such a universe an exclusively private one, to surrender to *vagueness of sensibility*. And the danger is one he does not wholly avoid. Yet, despite much obscurity, the reader realizes, as the work develops, that the poet is moving out of his private world; the total effect of the poem is to reveal self-absorption and the aesthetic existence as a cul-de-sac. To some extent, it is a poetic record of a writer's turning from the intense self-preoccupation of youth to the maturity of acceptance of human responsibility. Two things save La Tour du Pin from losing himself in his complex world of metaphor and private references. First, there is through the whole immense work an unswerving fidelity to "Le clair passé d'enfance où j'avais foe." Memories of a happy, dream-filled childhood lie behind the most deeply moving passage of the *Somme*; even when the poet puts his childhood behind him. "Ecoute-moi; je suis partie dès mon enfance," he is still in search of a new purity and innocence, achieved through an acceptance and a consecration of the human condition. Again, his poem is anchored to the earth by the Christian humanism which informs the entire work, even when his seekers seem lost on curious ways far from Christ. Though the poet himself does not always see, or at times appears to forget, Christ, he comes back to Him again and again. And at the end, after he has consigned his creations to a Hell of his own devising, he sees Christ plainly before him:

Il était là depuis toujours, et Sa Présence  
Bouleversait mon coeur qui l'attendait en vain  
A toutes les coulées de bois, sur les chemins  
En croix, par tous les vents et par tous les silences.

This Christocentric quality is an integrating factor, sustaining the poet's own quest for joy, and, in his vision, holding together the explorations of the characters he has created.

The view of man's nature and destiny presented in the *Somme* has affinities with the Personalism of Emmanuel Mounier, with its sense of the need for each man to participate in the responsibilities of the community and to be aware of the value of each individual as well as of the brother-

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hood of man. For all that, La Tour du Pin is a purer poet than many of his contemporaries. He resembles such a Christian Existentialist as Gabriel Marcel in that he ignores metaphysics; in the *Somme* he is striving to live his problems and to incarnate them. This poem suggests Péguy and Claudel rather than Pierre Emmanuel or Pierre-Jean Jouve. The result is that this elaborate charting of a private poetic universe becomes a celebration of Christian humanism and its end forecasts an even more intensive exploration of the world of men.

BY THE very complexity of its form, *Une Somme* would at first sight appear to exclude the possibility of poetic integration. It contains long stretches of poetic doctrine in prose, short lyrical poems, long meditative poems, dramatic interludes, brief tables, allegories, incantations, hymns, and poetic monologues. Yet the sense of dedication, of triumphant fidelity to the pursuit of innocence and poetic truth, and of the need to live in, and through, one's fellow men, gives this extraordinary mixture of literary form its own precise shape. Each section has its own lyrical validity, but the chief design is so vast that the spiritual content of each lyric, of each section, and of each book cannot be seen in its fulness save in terms of the entire *Somme*. Not the least impressive thing about the poem is the firmness of La Tour du Pin's grasp on his great theme the steady movement towards a climax. This does not mean that all the details are clear or that everything in the work is convincing. Provisionally at least, in the absence of a biographical gloss, some of the levels at which the symbolism operates are perplexing, and, despite his poetic holocaust late in the poem, it seems that part of La Tour du Pin remains immured in Tess, and that his song does not always observe his own injunction:

Il faudrait être plus précis; c'est trop facile  
De le décrire par l'étrange ou par la peur.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the diversity of forms in the *Somme* is an integral part of the total conception and that each poem yields its full meaning only in terms of the major unity. The selection even of whole books as embodying La Tour du Pin's "philosophy" might easily give the impression that he is another "ivory tower" poet, whereas the completed *Somme* in fact specifically rejects the special kind of "vie recluse en poésie" so elaborately enunciated earlier in it.

*The Dedicated Life in Poetry*, a translation by G. S. Fraser of two prose sections of the *Somme*—*The Dedicated Life in Poetry* and *The Correspondance of Laurent de Cayeux*—contains an introduction by Stephen Spender, which seems to me to lay itself open to a charge of this error. To begin with, the title of the translation is misleading, despite the fact that it is La Tour

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du Pin's title for a portion of Part IV of his poem. Also, Spender's introduction, while admirably summarizing these two statements of the doctrine of Tess, does not make it clear that, in the context of the whole *Somme*, they are tentative only. Of the part of *La Vie Recluse* called *Le Chant et la Somme des Chants*, Spender writes:

I think the key to La Tour du Pin's critical attitude and creative work can be found in this section. Content interests him more than form; and he fears that theories of poetry based on limited conceptions of form or poetic aim destroy what is really the life of poetry, which is the inner life of the poet, and beyond that the inner life and experience of God. He concentrates therefore on a description and analysis of that inner life which should be the content of poetry. The teaching of Patrice de la Tour du Pin's School of Tess is that the poet has to make not formal and verbal choices, but spiritual ones, selecting from the impulses of his soul those which are suitable for poetry and choosing the "dedicated life" of the poet which is parallel to, though different from, the dedicated life of the saint. Both have as their ultimate purpose the attainment of the experience of God.

THE latter part of this fairly expresses Lorenquin's teaching and, with some modifications, that of Laurent de Cayeux; but Spender nowhere makes it clear that, while both sections embody many ideas which La Tour du Pin holds to throughout the *Somme*, the "dedicated life in poetry," as conceived by Lorenquin and the other "abbots" is one of the errors the poet is eager to discard. Almost from the beginning, it is made plain that a poet, however pure his intensions, cannot isolate himself from the rest of humanity. The error of the "abbots" is that they lack a sense of the concreteness of life and that they have viewed their poetic purpose, not with humility, but with complacency. La Tour du Pin himself must win that humility before the purpose of the poem is consumed. This he does in the sufferings of war, and then Lorenquin and Laurent de Cayeux and their doctrines are buried in his hell.

C'est que certains recueils sont défendus.  
Il les a dépassés pour chercher la sagesse,  
Comme il m'a dépassé . . . je ne l'ai pas suivi . . .

he writes in the *Damnation of Lorenquin*; and of Laurent de Cayeux he says:

Qu'il ait voulu forcer des portes difficiles,  
Interdites peut-être à des âmes en chair,  
Recouvrir le mystère avec sa connaissance,  
Faulx, ce n'est plus le temps de plaindre sa malchance.  
Il était condamné par avance à l'Enfer.

Only when Tess has been destroyed, its doctrines re-seen in the light of new human experience, and three survivors go on a naked and difficult quest into

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the world of men, is the "World of Love" discovered and does La Tour du Pin say:

Si j'ai magnifié l'Homme dans mon esprit,  
Si j'ai voilé tes jeux à mon échelle infime,  
Il est un peu d'amour qui n'a pas dévié . . .

To shape a doctrine of poetry out of two sections of the *Somme*, closely didactic though they be, is to give a false impression of La Tour du Pin's poetic vision. They must be seen as stages in a richer discovery of man and self, important and by no means entirely abandoned stages, but ones occupying much the same relation to the corpus of La Tour du Pin's work as do some of T.S. Eliot's earlier poems to his entire output. Spender, in fact, quotes, without apparently seeing its significance, a letter written by the poet to Anne de Biéville in 1932: "Anne, if I were really to die before the end, before I have said all, mankind would count the book a sin—and it is written to the glory of Christ."

IT IS true that La Tour du Pin is, as Spender says, "an egoist in poetry," but the *Somme* does not remain in the personal legend and some of its most agonized portions are those in which La Tour du Pin endeavours to escape from it:

Est-ce ma conclusion, ma dernière trouvaille?  
L'absurde de mon sort qui ricane et qui raille,  
Cela de tout le genre humain, peut-être . . .  
Avoir vécu  
Comme un saule attentif, penché sur une eau claire,  
Avoir miré, jusqu'aux oiseaux qui s'y posèrent,  
Les vents qui l'ont battu, les pluies qui l'ont fouetté,  
Les astres dont la lueur a joué sur les branches,  
Pour n'en tirer que l'éternelle vanité . . .

The key to the *Somme* lies not only, as Spender suggests, in "Tout homme est une histoire sacrée," but also in:

Qu'importe ma légende, il n'est plus devant Toi  
Qu'une âme torturée du mal de connaissance;  
Le reste peut tomber, puisqu'il n'est pas l'essence,  
Pourrir comme la chair, s'oublier . . .

In this poem is paralleled the whole poetic career of Rimbaud, the passionate quest for a renewed purity, the defiant creation of a visionary universe, and its ultimate rejection. Indeed, where Rimbaud said "Quelle sottise c'était," La Tour du Pin cries:

Cherchant ma vérité, ma gloire, ma gloire et mon destin,  
Je ne vois qu'un absurde et vague bavardage.

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Spender writes that at the end of the *Somme* there is "an anticipation of wider, more public responsibilities to come at a later stage in his development," as if this part were a kind of footnote promising a sequel with a different orientation. But though the emphasis in the *Somme* is certainly on the private life, Books VIII and IX constitute not only a destruction of earlier concepts but also the acceptance of "wider, more public responsibilities." The *Testament* and *Thème* which end Book IX sum up the lessons learnt in the agony of "une vie engagée":

On n'en a pas fini d'interroger l'idole  
Qui mène à l'infini ses miroirs déformants;  
Je ne veux pas de sortilège ou de symbole,  
L'homme n'est qu'un faussaire ignare et décevant.

As a Christian poet, La Tour du Pin respects the integrity of each human personality, but also defines his attitude towards mankind in terms of the necessity for love and of realism. However, the lyrical fervor of many of the poems in the earlier books shows that he is not merely fabricating quests for his poets nor building up a universe and a myth for the sake of destroying them—that he is, in fact, *involved* in each lyric. The whole of the *Somme* is lived through. Nor does the "mise à l'autre monde" imply that an abstract philosophy or religious pattern has been imposed upon the work, that out of a sense of "Christian duty," he rejects his lyrical impulse and replaces poetry by rational argument. Through his myth La Tour du Pin has achieved a unique synthesis which enables him at the same time to express his moods lyrically and to justify poetically his movement beyond the mood of the lyric. Behind the private myth lies the Christian myth: "O Dieu, bien sûr, c'est Dieu qui hantait cette *Somme*,"—which guides the poet's vision to the final realization that poetry is no substitute for life or God, and yet makes this realization itself poetic.

THE plan of *Une Somme de Poésie* is perhaps the most elaborate to be conceived by a modern poet. The 600 pages contain nine books and eight interludes, of which almost three-tenths is in prose. All told, there are almost 400 separate poems in the *Somme*, ranging from verses of four or five lines to poems of 600 lines. Any brief comment on such a work, especially so close to the time of its publication, must necessarily be superficial. Because La Tour du Pin works so largely in symbol, much of his language is obscure, and interpretation is made difficult by his ascribing his poems to various characters who inhabit the *Somme*, so that special problems arise in estimating the relationship between dramatic utterance and the author's own personal expression.

The whole work has its intellectual shape—the solitary quest, the dedication to poetry, the establishment of Tess, the seekings of the poets, the de-

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velopment of revolt, the succession of "abbot," the destruction of Tess, the search by the three for the World of Love, the damning of the poetic inhabitants, and finally the new immersion in the world of men. But it has poetic shape as well. The delicate lyrics in *La Quête de Joie* contrast with the incantations, and the passionate adoration of the *Psaumes*; the abstract arguments of *La Vie Recluse en Poésie* are balanced by the ecstatic lyricism of *Enfants de Septembre*; the satirical touches in *La Mort au Donateur* and the *Journal de Voyage d'Adam Purcheyan* contrast with the solemn agonies of the *Cortinaire's Le Don de la Passion*. La Tour du Pin uses an amazing variety of poetic forms, ranging from the short-line stanza in four or five lines to the Claudelian lines of the *Psaumes*. Yet his verse always pulses with life, and, on every page, magnificent lines and stanzas strike the reader with strange power. Even where the special reference is unusually elusive, the whole dense symbolism gives a sense of almost mystical fervor.

To an English reader, one of the most striking things about the *Somme* must be that part which concerns the attempt to regain the childhood vision, an endeavor which seems more typical of the English than of the French inspiration. There are a purity and a gentleness beneath all the anguish and questioning. For all the poet's seeking for maturity and his rejection of his childhood dreams, it is the nostalgia of the soul for innocence which sustains him in his long and difficult task. But the *Somme* is more than the story of the adventure of La Tour du Pin with his soul. It is a poet's meditation on his craft. Like Valéry and Ezra Pound, La Tour du Pin undertakes to produce at one and the same time poetry and a conscious analysis of the springs of poetry. The prose sections which deal directly with the nature of poetry preach a dedication to it that at first appears as complete as dedication to the religious life. Both Lorenquin and Laurent de Cayeux, although they would leave the maximum possible freedom to each poet, suggest that the knowledge which poetry can gain can be achieved only by withdrawal and contemplation. Both, it is true, warn the poets of Tess against imagining that the "tressaillement de fièvre" and the "bouleversement d'un moment" form the essence of the poetic state; and Lorenquin stresses that "à vous détacher des affections et des devoirs de la terre, vous risquez de perdre pied." Yet there is a lack of humility in the very conception of Tess; and the poet comes to see that the "dedicated life in poetry," as it is worked out there, errs because, although the sacramental nature of poetry is understood, the dedicated life shirks the obligation to immerse oneself in the reality and truth of everyday life. True poetry comes with humility, when the poet is no longer bound up wholly in himself,

tout seul devant la glace,  
Dans l'obsession des yeux eux-mêmes perdus.

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So, before he learns that poetry is not an end, but only a way to man, and one path to the universal Spirit of Love incarnate in Christ, the poet must be tested by the seductions of egotism, and genuine truths seen for a time in the distorting mirrors of self-involvement. Only after the Passion of Man is the Passion of Christ understandable. The explorations of Tess have produced many riches, which have become part of its creator's consciousness, but the fruits of the "Great Game" are ruthless self-judgment, and a damning of the poets of Tess for falling prey to one or another of the temptations which ring round poetic creation. The quest for joy takes La Tour du Pin to the mystery of the Redemption, to the acceptance of life as it is, given its full meaning only when joined to the sufferings and the resurrection of Christ.

THE poet has developed his own particular means of expression, using everyday words in a symbolic sense, and repeating certain phrases over and over again, as in an incantation, so that they acquire a new and mysterious significance. It is interesting to note that La Tour du Pin uses "cold" as often and in much the same sense as does Edith Sitwell, and that his use of "sun," "fire," "death," and many other words is strangely like hers. Save for the fact that La Tour du Pin's verse forms are more regular than Edith Sitwell's the closest analogy I can find in English to such parts of the *Somme* as *La Quête de Joie* and *Le Monde d'Amour* is Miss Sitwell's *The Song of the Cold* and *The Coat of Fire*. The French poet is less sibylline and rhetorical, but his imagery, his reiterations, his elevated tone and the cryptic nature of some of his allusions are remarkably like those of Edith Sitwell. It would be interesting to know whether or not she had read the published parts of the *Somme* before writing her later verse.

Lines like these:

I will cry to the spring to give me the birds and the Serpent's speech  
That I may weep for those who are of the cold—  
That ultimate cold within the heart of man

have a good deal in common with La Tour du Pin's:

Tous less pays qui n'ont plus de légende  
Seront condamnés à mourir de froid . . .  
Loin dans l'âme, les solitudes s'étendent  
Sous le soleil mort de l'amour de soi.

"Le vent," "la lumière," "l'île," "le marais," "le sang," "la posée," and other words gain new meaning in the vocabulary of the *Somme*.

The poems are full, too, of images drawn from the experience of one who has lived much in the open air, away from the café-society reflected in most modern French verse.

The large cast of *Une Somme de Poésie* has its disadvantages as well as its obvious advantages. It is possible that La Tour du Pin has at times drawn

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upon real people for some of the traits of the inhabitants of Tess. Often he identifies himself completely with a character, as with Borlonge who is wounded and imprisoned during the war. Some of his creations come fully to life; others remain half-realized. There are the proud and austere-dedicated Lorenquin, the milder and more human Laurent de Cayeux, Gorphoncellet, the noble and tender last "abbot" of Tess, the Cortinaire, who leaves Tess to work out a life of lonely suffering in vicarious satisfaction for the world's ills, Swanter, the violent rebel who is the first to desert Tess, Catherine Aulnaie, the beautiful leader of a band of strolling players, and Jean de Flatterre, the knightly adventurer. But others, Pentom, Fiellouze, Philippe Aldine, Fauln, Havilié, and Litcheur, have no really substantial personality. I suspect that the poet has over-peopled his kingdom and thus over-complicated his picture of poetic reality. These characters seek their "ways" in a strange landscape of swamps, marshes, plateaus, along rivers dotted with islands and up slopes of snow. There is a high plateau, Hulmaune, and the lake of Undeneur, where Undeneur keeps his "Auberge de la Création." The topography of the land of the *Somme* is at times veiled with mist, at times clear and sharp in its details, but over it always hangs an air of mystery:

Sous le regard du plus lumineux d'entre nous,  
Insensiblement, d'une longue chevauchée  
Nous étions parvenus sur ces bords,  
Qui peut-être une fois nous avions vus en songe,  
Ces plans d'eau sourde où mystère se prolonge  
Relayé de lueur en lueur vers le Nord.

This country is peopled with grotesque animals, such as might leap from a Bosch or a Dali painting; and these are classified by the naturalists, who also divide the "angels" into their various categories, those "angels" who represent flashes of illumination, glimpses of spiritual knowledge, messages, in fact, from other worlds of reality.

THE literary influences on the *Somme* are unusually diverse. Dante is certainly there, in the symbolic language, in the conception of the "comédie intérieure," in the Hell to which La Tour du Pin consigns his creations and in the image of the women through whose inspiration he comes at last to see the relationship between human love and Divine love. Milton, too, has perhaps helped to inspire the description in Book I of the poetic Genesis and of the Garden of Eden, as well as of Hell. Throughout the whole poem La Tour du Pin remembers the peril of Rimbaud's attempt to regain the vision of purity by the rejection of mankind. Rimbaud's quest, indeed, might be the theme to which the "quête de joie" is counterpointed. Rilke, whose angels are both like and unlike those of the Patrician universe; Shelley, whose lyrical



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tone La Tour du Pin catches in *Enfants de Septembre* and elsewhere, and other poets who have sought the untainted world of innocence, are often suggested. There is something of Victor Hugo's *Légende des Siècles* in the vastness and impressiveness of the whole, and of Claudel in the noble rhythms and the ecstatic rhetoric of the *Psaumes* and the *Offices*. More important than these, however, appear to be the influences of Blake and of Celtic and Scandinavian legends. The memory of Blake's *Prophetic Books* may have helped to determine La Tour du Pin's presentation of his myth through symbolic figures and his conception of the interplay of father, son, and spirit in the poetic process, but he is never as complex or as cryptic as Blake. The symbolism of the *Songs of Innocence* has left clear traces especially in the *Chansons de Pentom*, one of which is the *Chanson de Ramoneur*. The Arthuurian legends, that of the Grail in particular, haunt the *Somme*, too, not only in the general concept of the questing poets, but especially in the descriptions of Jean de Flatterre, and of Ullin-Roi. The names of his characters sometimes seem to come from tales of medieval chivalry and sometimes from the Sagas.

Yet it is not to be thought that the work is merely a boiling-down of poems read. All the diverse literary influences are assimilated into the myth, whose inspiration and direction are La Tour du Pin's own. He makes his own discoveries, and he expresses them in his own way, and behind all he says is the memory of his own childhood and the strength of his religious faith. The dominant mood is one of joy and pure ecstasy, expressed in a style of remarkable purity. La Tour du Pin's language is denuded, almost ascetic at times; he uses metaphor freely, yet scorns the excesses of language. In the stripped austerity of his expression, he recalls the Evangelists and such mystics as St. John of the Cross. Yet he can also, especially in such sections as *La Quête de Joie*, clothe abstract ideas in senuous guise. He seems to pour out poetry in an unending stream. Most often austere, he can also be eloquent, impassioned, lyrical, dialectical, and playful. In places, as in the *Office Secret de Lorenquin*, the poet appears raised up to almost mystical intensity of utterance, absorbed in the ecstasy of contemplation. Yet the language remains pure and controlled:

Ciel! ciel! ô ciel inné!  
Où va s'évanouir la flamme retrouvée,  
Perdant son cerne d'or, le dernier blanc possible,  
Et le sens de remplir un lieu du foudroiement!  
Ciel! ciel! ciel! ô Dieu libre,  
Devant lequel s'abîme toute fin . . .  
Et ma Grâce s'élève et me laisse en arrière,  
Puisque l'Amour supporte et la flambée soutient  
Ce qui regarde un Dieu brûlant de sa lumière!

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The varied harmonies of the *Somme* are essential to the changing moods of the poem and for the sustaining of interest throughout such a long work; but everywhere the voice of Patrice de la Tour du Pin is unmistakable. These are the authentic Patrician notes:

J'avais suivi tes pas perdus au fond des bois,  
Ils menaient aux ravins gonflés par les averses,  
Et là, je t'ai trouvée, abbatue et sans voix,  
Frissonnant du froid de l'aube qui transperce.

and:

J'appelle Solitude ces lieux où Vous êtes Seul,  
Ce coeur ouvert à Vous comme il l'était avant,  
Malgré les confidents que j'ai trouvés dans l'ombre,  
L'angélisme et les fausses vénération . . .

IT IS too soon to judge the *Somme* as a whole. This ambitious work, shaped partly as a personal legend, haunts, moves, and perplexes the reader. Only when the poem has been long lived with will it be possible to decide how successful is the mixture of prose, poetry, and drama; whether the didacticism does not outweigh the lyricism, whether, too, the emergent intention is sufficiently related to the tension and conflict of discovery; whether, in simple fact, the Christian's poet's end and aim are ever movingly put in doubt. Still some tentative judgments may be made. As the myth of the poem is essentially the myth of the "monde privé" of La Tour du Pin, it is the personality of the poet which gives the work its real life. Although the inhabitants of Tess and the "monastery" itself do not emerge as fully-projected realities, as tangible things and beings outside of the poet, individual portions of the *Somme* are triumphant vindications of La Tour du Pin's method; for instance, the whole of *Le Jeu de Seul* and of *La Quête de Joie*, *Le Lucernaire*, the *Chansons de Pentom*, the *Psaumes*, most of Book VIII, and *Le Testament* in Book IX. Any one of the books of *Une Somme de Poésie* would suffice in itself to make a poet's reputation. Yet I suspect that the work is somewhat too long. Some groups of poems which, in a collection, might validly represent various aspects of the same kind of inspiration appear repetitive in a progressive structure, especially in Books VII and VIII. The conception of Tess, the real core of the work, takes rather too long to mature. The quest of the three seekers for the World of Love in Book VIII appears to traverse some of the ground of the earlier books and, in the context of the whole, to lack some of the energy of those books. Although *L'Eternel Cantique*, the eighth interlude, is one of the highest points of the *Somme*, much of the book which precedes it tends to sacrifice lyrical force and sensuousness to intellectualization.

As a whole, however, the *Somme* has an almost overwhelming impressive-

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ness, a sense of discovery and revelation which is at times exhilarating. Whether Patrice de la Tour du Pin has really come out of his private world, whether he has "taken flesh" or not, are matters difficult to decide until the "Sum of the Others" is before us. Provisionally, at least, parts of *Une Somme de Poésie* remain shrouded in tantalizing darkness. Yet one thing is certain; this massive work has real grandeur; it is profound, wise, rich in beauty and delight, and sounds a note unique in modern poetry. It is hard to understand why, so far, it seems to have excited so little attention in the English-speaking world.

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### Four Quartets: Contemplatio Ad Amorem

(Continued from page 10)

less than everything," exacts for its continuance on this earth an ever-renewed resolution of desires that are infinitely complex.

St. Ignatius brings his *Contemplatio* (and the full circle of the *Exercises*) to a close in the prayer of oblation, *Sume et Suscipe*, a prayer of complete reference of one's self to God. But the *Sume et Suscipe* is at the same time a humble petition for grace: Love comes down from above. *Omne datum optimum, et omne donum perfectum desursum est* (Jac. 1:17). The *Four Quartets* end on the same note of humility coupled with the same prayer for the grace of empowerment to make the perfect act of love:

With the drawing of this Love and the voice  
of this Calling . . .

And all shall be well and  
All manner of things shall be well  
When the tongues of flame are in-folded  
Into the crowned knot of fire  
And the fire and the rose are one.

(Little Gidding, V)

# Hopkins' Imagery:

## The Relation of His Journal to His Poetry

BY JOHN PICK

THERE is a strange though accountable misconception among critics that Hopkins, after seven years of poetic silence dating from his entrance into the Jesuit novitiate in 1868, suddenly burst into song in 1875 when he wrote "The Wreck of the Deutschland" without any kind of preparation and without any exercise of his talents in the interim. This misconception has perhaps been fostered by a letter which he wrote to his friend R. W. Dixon:

What I had written I burnt before I became a Jesuit and resolved to write no more unless it were by wish of my superiors . . . so for seven years I wrote nothing. But when in the Winter of '75 the Deutschland was wrecked . . . I was affected by the account and happening to say so to my rector he said that he wished someone would write a poem on the subject. On this hint I set to work and, though my hand was out at first, produced one.

While it is true that this poem and those that followed until his death in 1889 are so different from his juvenilia and early verses as to seem almost the writing of another man, nevertheless the germinal seeds of his mature poetry are to be found in the Journal that he kept between 1868 and 1875 and in the lecture notes which he gathered for the purpose of teaching rhetoric during his early Jesuit years of poetic silence.

This is very especially true of his imagery, for a study of his Journal shows that he was setting down those same carefully incisive descriptions of nature that are later found in his poetry. His Journal became his preliminary sketch pad, his field book in which the rudimentary and embryonic images of his later poetry are to be found.

It would be easy to demonstrate that in both the earlier Journal and the poems the same man is at work. Even more remarkable is the fact that often the very same images in the Journal crop out in poems written six, eight, or even twenty years later. Indeed in this poem "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" written the year before his death, he continues to employ these earlier observations.

At first sight it would seem that he drew on his Journal for the raw material of his images—and indeed we know that he occasionally reread his Journal in later life. Or at first sight it would seem that he so fixed these images in his mind that later his memory could call them up.

The truth, however, seems to be that through the practice of keeping his

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Journal he developed certain ways of looking at things and certain ways of setting them down—that he developed a *habitus* and therefore one should not be surprised at the resemblance between the earlier Journal and the later poetry.

Even more significant is the way in which the raw material was finally transmuted into poetry. A study of the two sets of images becomes an important approach to an understanding of the creative process no matter how many mysteries of that alchemy may remain unsolved.

TO ROBERT BRIDGES he wrote of the genesis of one of his poems of 1877: "The Hurrahing sonnet was the outcome of half an hour of extreme enthusiasm as I walked home alone one day from fishing in the Elwy." Such a comment gives an impression similar to that expressed in a sonnet Hopkins wrote to the same friend the very year of his death, that inspiration is responsible for the entire poem and that all that remains is to work it out carefully and conscientiously:

The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong  
Spur, live and lancing like a blowpipe flame,  
Breathes once and, quenched faster than it came,  
Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song.  
Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long  
Within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same:  
The widow of an insight lost she lives, with aim  
Now known and work at hand now never wrong.

Interesting light on Hopkins' views of inspiration is cast by another letter:

The word inspiration need cause no difficulty. I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or to strike into it unasked. This mood arises from various causes, physical generally, as good health or state of the air, or, prosaic as it is, length of time after a meal.

Yet instead of looking nine months or nine years after the date 1877 when he wrote "Hurrahing in Harvest," if one goes back nine years in his Journal under the year 1868 and the period immediately following he will find images expressing the same delight in nature that he embodied in the poem to which he refers. Whereas for instance he opens the poem with

Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks arise  
Around . . .

he had earlier written

A steep sloping field in which the sheaves were scattered . . . not made  
into stooks (which by the Devonshire people call shocks).

He continues in the poem:

. . . up above, what wind-walks!

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In his Journal he made such notations as:

Before a N. E. wind great bars or rafters of cloud all the morning, and in a manner all day marching across the sky in regular rank and with equal space between.

In particular there was one light raft of beech which the wind footed and strained on . . .

White-rose clouds formed the ground of the sky, near the sundown taking straight ranks . . .

There were travelling stack clouds . . .

A fine sunset: the higher clouds dead clear blue bridged by a broad slant causeway rising from right to left . . .

. . . slanted flashing 'travellers', all in flight, stepping one behind the other. . . .

Then follows in the poem:

. . . What lovely behavior  
Of silk-sack clouds!

In the Journal he had noted:

A simple behaviour of cloudscape . . .

. . . silky lingering clouds . . .

. . . baggy cobweb clouds . . .

The day had been very bright and clear, distances smart, herd of towering pillow clouds . . .

Fine-weather bales of clouds.

Or, if one prefers to interpret "sack" not as a bag but as a coat as in "sack coat," then

High up again, breathing through wooly coats of cloud. . .

There follows in the poem:

. . . has wilder wilful-wavier  
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?

While in the Journal:

. . . clouds meal white . . .

Mealy clouds . . .

. . . a sort of meal, seemed to have spread upon the distant south . . .

White-rose clouds formed fast . . . Later moulding . . .

. . . delicately moulded clouds. . . .

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In the poem:

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder  
Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violent sweet!

The Journal has such references as:

. . . burly-shouldered ridges . . .  
. . . flat-topped hillocks and shoulders outlined with wavy ridges . . .  
. . . the shoulders of the hills. . .

The poem goes on:

These things, these things were here and but the beholder  
Wanting.

The Journal:

I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away  
from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to  
see it and it could be called out everywhere again.

Such parallels could be multiplied almost endlessly. The remarkable thing is not so much the exact correspondence but rather that in both cases it is the same artist looking at the same materials in much the same way. It would be incongruous to think of Hopkins as rushing back from fishing in the Elwy to his room in order to comb his Journal for images to express his delight.

Sometimes a single passage in the Journal may be found later developed into an entire poem. Thus, for instance, he jotted in the Journal:

The ashtree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was  
lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed  
there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to  
see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more.

Six years later he wrote "Binsey Poplars" conveying the same feeling.

In the opening of "The Windhover" he had written of the hawk  
I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin,  
dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding  
High there, how he wrung upon the rein of a wimpling wing  
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,  
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow bend . . .

while in his Journal:

. . . a wedge of sunlight streamed down through a break in the clouds  
upon the valley: a hawk also was hanging on the hover.  
The sun itself and the spot of 'session' dappled with big laps and  
flowers-in-damask of cloud.  
The day was rainy and a rolling wind.  
. . . the leaves dimpled in the middle and beautifully wimpled at the  
edge. . . .

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Further, the comparison of the wheeling bird to a skate's heel is reminiscent of the frequent references to skating in his Journal:

Early in December was frost and some skating.

The Provincial's day. Skating. But before this weather very mild and the skating did not last.

Even the reference to ploughing in the poem ("Sheer plod makes plough down sillion shine") has its counterpart in the Journal:

I talked to Br. Duffy ploughing: he told me the names of the cross, side-plate, muzzle, regulator, and short chain. He talked of something *spraying* out, meaning *splaying* out and of *combing* the ground.

This same interest is also manifested in "Harry Ploughman" and in "Pied Beauty" with its

Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

—lines which are further memories of such prose entries as:

Br. Sidegreaves has heard the high ridges of a field called *folds* and the hollow between the *drip*.

A few pages later:

I sat down in the lap or fold of a steep slanting pasturefield . . .

And:

The country is bare and you see the valleys and fell-sides plotted and painted with the squares of the fields and their hedges far and wide.

This poem, an inspired catalog of the pied and dappled things to which Hopkins was so devoted, is almost like a distillation of the hundred pages of the Journal into a curtal sonnet. It opens:

Glory be to God for dappled things—  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls.

Images in the Journal of the sky as brindled or brindled are numerous and there is even an entry:

Chestnuts as bright as coals or spots of vermilion.

His reference in "The Starlight Night" to the stars as

Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare  
has as its background such observations as

. . . flakes whitened and swaled like feathers . . .

and

I looked at the pigeons down in the kitchen yard and so on. The two



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young ones are all white and the pins on the folded wings, quill pleated over quill, are . . . crisp and shapely. . . .

THE foregoing images from the Journal are merely a random sampling of correspondences. What is impressive is the way in which they are at the time alike and unlike the images or passages in the poems. The fundamental difference between the Journal and the poem is, of course, the basic difference between prose and poetry.

During the very same time that Hopkins was keeping his Journal and that he had forsworn poetry (1868-75) he was concerned on a theoretical plane with the distinction between poetry and prose. He wrote, for example, an essay entitled "Poetry and Verse" in which he contended:

Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake.

Then he continued, introducing a term for which he is now famous:

(Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake—and therefore the inscape must be dwelt on . . .). . . . Poetry . . . is speech wholly or partially repeating the same kind of figure which is over and above meaning . . . if it has a meaning and is meant to be heard for its own sake it will be poetry. . . .

This concept of poetry is repeated during approximately the same year in his lecture notes entitled "Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric":

Verse is speech having a marked figure, order of sounds independent of meaning. . . . It is *figure of spoken sound*.

This same definition is anticipated in an essay of his undergraduate days "On the Origin of Beauty: A Platonic Dialogue." But, even more important, this very same idea is repeated in various letters written later during the very years that he was writing not his Journal but his poems. In reference to his very first poem after his years of silence, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," he remarked in a letter already quoted in part:

I was affected by the account and happening to say so to my rector he said that he wished someone would write a poem on the subject. On this hint I set to work and, though my hand was out at first, produced one. I had long had haunting my ear the echo of a new rhythm which I now realised on paper.

And in probably his most quoted comment he held:

But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music, and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry.

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The above passage was written in 1879; nor does he stop emphasizing this same point of view in later years. In 1886, for instance, he comments on the poetry of one of his contemporaries:

. . . full of feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, often fine imagery and other virtues, but the essential and only lasting thing left out—what I call *inscape*, that is species or individually-distinctive beauty of style.

Such passages are frequent and recurrent: "inscape . . . the very soul of art" or "Nothing but fine execution survives long."

Such reflections are misleading if Hopkins be interpreted to mean that the mere imposition of an external inscape of a sound pattern differentiates poetry from prose, his *Journal* from "The Windhover" or "Pied Beauty." This of course has already been seen in those passages where he says that "meaning is essential" and "if it has meaning and is meant to be heard for its own sake it will be poetry."

Thus, frequently in his letters he emphasizes the necessity of meaning. He refers, for example, to Swinburne's poetry as ". . . a perpetual functioning of genius without truth, feeling, or any adequate matter to be at function on." Of Tennyson he wrote: ". . . his gift of utterance is truly golden, but go further home and you come to thoughts commonplace and wanting in nobility." In a long letter about Keats he remarks: "His contemporaries, as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and even Leigh Hunt, right or wrong, still concerned themselves with great causes, as liberty and religion. . . . Nevertheless I feel and see in him the beginnings of . . . and interest in higher things and of powerful and active thought." And to Patmore: ". . . I hold that fine works of art . . . that are not only ideal in form but ideal with high matter as well, are really a great power in the world, an element of strength even to an empire."

It is therefore essential to explore the relationship between matter and form as Hopkins conceived it. Poetry is made with words, and "the word is the expressing, *uttering* of the idea in the mind." Further, "Works of art of course like words utter the idea." The relationship between the idea and the "uttering" or expression is further clarified when he says:

The effect of verse is one on expression and on thought, viz. concentration and all which is implied by this.

He continues:

This does not mean terseness nor rejection of what is collateral nor emphasis nor even definiteness though these may be very well, or best attained by verse, but mainly, though the words are not quite adequate, vividness of idea.

But we are still far from perceiving how Hopkins fused and transmuted the kind of images he wrote in his *Journal* into his poetry. It is of course

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evident that with the imposition of a pattern of sound he concentrated and enjambed and made vividly intense his images. Yet his poems are much more than that. In his various critical comments he deprecates a concept of poetry on the one hand as a mere "impotent collection of particulars" . . . pointless photograph of still life . . . minute upholstery description" and on the other as mere "arrangements in vowel sounds."

NOW, while the rudimentary images themselves are to be found in the Journal, so also is the centralizing idea of the poems which fuses the images into an organic and living poem. These ideas, like the images, are not so much repeated in the poems as the result of an habitual way of looking at reality.

No one can doubt, for instance, that the controlling idea giving direction and meaningfulness to the scattered images of "The Starlight Night" is to be found in such passages as:

As we drove home the stars came out thick: I leant back to look at them  
and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom  
all that beauty comes home . . .

or that the idea behind "Hurrahing in Harvest" is parallel to such an entry as

I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the  
bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it.

So, too, "Pied Beauty" with its opening "Glory be to God for dappled things" is like his prose entry "Laus Deo—the river today and yesterday." And these prose passages—as a way of looking at nature—take their orientation from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. In "God's Grandeur" he wrote:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God;  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

while in a prose commentary on the *Exercises* he had remarked:

All things therefore are charged with God and if we know how to  
touch them off give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring  
and tell of him.

So pervasive are these *Spiritual Exercises*—with which Hopkins acquainted himself immediately upon his entrance into the Jesuit novitiate in 1868 and which he reread, re-studied, and re-meditated constantly all the rest of his life—in the formation and direction of the controlling ideas of his poems, the ideas which made the individual images take on a fresh and integrated set of meanings and tensions and relationships that their importance can hardly be overemphasized.

In a commentary he wrote on the *Spiritual Exercises* at the very same time

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that he was composing his poems he once more reiterated in a passage on God as Creator:

. . . men of genius are said to create, a painting, a poem, a tale, a tune, a policy; not indeed the colors and the canvas, not the words or notes, but the design, the character, the air, the plan. How then?—from themselves, from their own minds.

In the same place he considers the purpose of creation, and he holds that man, the poet, the artist, the worker, is meant like the rest of creation to sing a hymn of praise to God. The "design, the character, the air, the plan" he is to find in the diverse scattered images of nature is a theophany and a *Laudate Dominum*. The universe is

. . . a book he [God] has written, of the riches of his knowledge, teaching endless truths, full lessons of wisdom, a poem of beauty: what is it about? His praise, the reverence due to him, the way to serve him; it tells of his glory.

The intellectual content, the "meaning" which a poem utters will therefore be to discover the meaning of the separate images that are found in nature.

But in spite of Hopkins' frequent distinction between the matter and form of poetry for purposes of logical distinction, his ultimate ideal is to see the two so fused that they take on a new and independent life of their own in the work of art. Thus he can write:

Works of art of course like words utter the idea . . . . The further in anything, as a work of art, the organisation is carried out, the deeper the form penetrates . . . the more capacity for receiving that synthesis . . . which gives us the unity.

So closely welded could become this synthesis that the idea and the word become one:

In writing this poem Shelley must either have put before his mind an idea which he wishes to embody in words . . . or else the idea rose in the forms of expression which we read in the poem in his mind, thought and expression indistinguishable.

And lest there be no mistake, Hopkins adds: "The latter I believe to be the truer way of regarding composition."

Does this mean that Hopkins held or implied that the end of poetry is didactic? By no means. Not only does he exclude from poetry mere nonsense verse beautiful in sound but without meaning, but on the other hand he rejects didactic intent. The true end of poetry for Hopkins is to give joy, a joy in contemplation, and

Art exacts this energy of contemplation . . . the synthesis of the succession should give, unlock, the contemplative enjoyment of the unity of the whole.

# Book Reviews

## Diary of Darkness

*Journal.* By Paule Régnier. Preface by Jacques Madaule and biographical notes by Jeanne Clouzot-Régnier. Paris: Plon.

M. JACQUES MADAULE calls this book "the most lucid and most extraordinary document on the depths of the human condition," and other critics, equally competent, have been moved to similar sentiments—or to a harsh condemnation. But this last evaluation has not been prompted by exclusively literary considerations, for there is the single and sad fact that Paule Régnier brought her *Journal* to a close by taking her own life at the age of sixty-two.

As appalling as it may seem, some have ventured that this act of self-destruction has less terrifying aspects than certain previous events in her life. However, let us not record the story here: there are M. Madaule's preface and the biographical notes. But most of all there is the *Journal* itself, begun in 1921 and terminated on the last day of November, 1950. If moral or religious judgments be set aside, there can be no question that this document, so different from the one that Gide left, is an indication of genius without pretense or pose. It is an entire examination of an incomplete being and of the friendly help and spiritual counsel that had been tendered to her. It is a precious source for insight into life during the involved interim in France.

The writing of these pages could not have been an easy task in spite of the relief it seemed to offer at times. Perhaps the solace and the strength the writer sought by putting words on paper were lodged in another quarter. Still, whatever the ultimate reason for this inadequacy, it is difficult not to wish, in the face of Paule Régnier's failure at the end, that it might have been possible to remove at least some of the misunderstandings that endow this tragedy with so dark a substance. In any event, however, it is becoming apparent that the publication of Paule Régnier's *Journal* is one of the recent major literary events.

SPIRE PITOU

## Waugh Revisited

*Love among the Ruins: A Romance of the New Future.* By Evelyn Waugh. London: Chapman and Hall.

IN A frightening and yet funny fantasy, Evelyn Waugh has satirized the Welfare State by projecting into the near future the all too logical development of what he sees around him in the contemporary world. The main motif of the life ahead of us would seem to be boredom—but Waugh manages to make out of boredom a bristling and lively story in the fifty pages of his new book.

Miles Plastic, moulded by the Welfare State, is an orphan—his last relative died of boredom at the conveyor-belt—and he had been properly reared by the

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State with the correct periods of Constructive Play and "on the first Friday of every month he was psychoanalysed."

Eventually he is assigned to the Air Force "to train instructors to train instructors to train instructors in Personal Recreation." This becomes so tedious that he sets fire to the Air Force Training School, is charged with "Anti-social Activity," and sent to Mountjoy Castle which he finds a joy because it is an old estate representing the beauty and variety of an earlier period. He is declared rehabilitated by the New Penology and is released with a Certificate of Human Personality ("a vital document" in the Welfare State). Sub-officials envy his appointment as a deputy in the Euthanasia Center ("the one department that's expanding"). Laments one envious fellow official: "I've been in Contraceptives for five years. It's a blind alley."

The Euthanasia Center is directed by Dr. Beamish "now much embittered, like many of his contemporaries, by the fulfillment of his early hopes. He had signed manifestos in his hot youth, had raised his fist in Barcelona and had painted abstractedly for *Horizon*." So popular have become the services of his Center that important people seek priorities and "Foreigners came in such numbers to take advantage of the service that immigration authorities now turn back the bearers of single tickets." Dr. Beamish contemplated the necessity of charging a fee to cut the demand.

Then a wonderfully strange person appeared before Miles Plastic in his office: a girl different from the thousands of women who crowded to the Center—for Clara had an enveloping "long, silken, corn-gold beard," the result of a bungled Klugmann's Operation to sterilize her for the State Ballet because, of course, babies would ruin her dancing. Miles spends with her an idyllic interlude—but, alas, she goes off and has a special beard operation and becomes like everyone else.

The only thing left for Miles is to set fire to Mountjoy Castle and then finally, by snapping the lighter in his pocket, to make a holocaust of himself—at last he can burn with a gemlike flame.

Christianity in this world of the near future has become only a memory and at Santa-Claus-Tide ("no holiday in the department of Euthanasia, which was an essential service") the hall porter watches on television an old obscure folk play. It is of particular professional interest to him because it dealt with earlier maternity services: "the strange spectacle of an ox and an ass, an old man with a lantern, and a young mother." His comment is "People here are always complaining. They ought to realize what things were like before Progress."

Such is Waugh's brave new world and such are the people—one would hesitate to say persons—in it.

Waugh, with the help of friends, has added a still further dimension to *Love among the Ruins* with Greco-Roman line drawings which suggest that civilization without Christianity is a contradiction at no matter what period in the history of man. *Love among the Ruins* is a minor interlude for Waugh while working at his new trilogy (the first volume *Men at Arms* has appeared), but his friends will wish that he had allowed himself the dimensions of Huxley or of Orwell.

JOHN PICK

## BOOK REVIEWS

### The Edge of Conscience

*Gertrud von Le Fort: Das erzählende Werk.* By Hajo Jappe. Meran: Unterberger.

THIS book intends to be—and is—a guide to an understanding of the religious and artistic aims of Gertrud von Le Fort. It introduces the reader to the totality of her narrative production—excluding the lyrics and the book *Die ewige Frau*—by showing how the stories, persons, events, and backgrounds are interrelated from the viewpoint of the philosophy of the authoress. It traces and re-thinks her ideas, concepts, feelings, and observations, usually offered by Le Fort in symbolic form. It analyzes the individual characters, and their often unusual attitudes, as exponents of Le Fort's belief in the importance of vicarious religious sacrifice for the salvation of our modern pagan world. It has been written—in a somewhat labored language, difficult for non-Germans—from a sense of profound gratitude for the inspiring work of the poetess. Jappe is so filled with admiration for the ability and religious position of Gertrud von Le Fort that he is inclined to consider her not only a genius—which she of course is—but also as a Christian woman with a God-given mission. Her charismatic mandate is to show us the way to true Christian humility, sacrifice, consecration to the will of God, and service in His name for mankind.

She is exceptionally gifted, able to hear the voice of God where others, even the dignitaries of the Church, sometimes fail to hear it. She has the courage to speak her mind and to conceive of situations in which persons, especially young women, act and think seemingly beyond the recognized order of thought and behavior in the Catholic church. Jappe appears to approve of her often daring religious, mystical reflections, which tend to point out that man's true bliss lies only in fulfilling the will of God, not in anticipating it, a will which is supposed to be not necessarily the sentiment of the Catholic church. Some personages like the young Barby, Blanche, and Veronika at times seem to be outside the traditional Catholic way of life. Gertrud von Le Fort—according to Jappe—favors a change of emphasis in Catholic attitude from the position of self-sufficiency and contented loyalty to one of self-negation, self-extinction, for Christ's sake, from a status of *Gloria* to one of *Agnus Dei*. Barby knows better than her Mother Superior the religious mandate of the hour. Veronika, willing to endanger the salvation of her soul, receives the grace of God in the end and even enlightens the priest. Blanche, that fearful, humble, frightened, trembling, suffering child of God, is selected by providence to triumph over the proud, self-assured, Marie de l'Incarnation who desires martyrdom selfishly.

Jappe says what has been said before by K. H. Groensmit, Maria Eschbach, Theodorich Kampmann, Franz Mitzka, Alois Demf, A. Wiedemann, and many others, but he says it more completely, and he includes briefly the latest works of von Le Fort, and he does not argue as a critical scholar nor take issue with previous criticism. There is no table of contents.

Jappe admits that other approaches (historical, stylistic) to the work of Le Fort are desirable. He is mainly interested in her ideas which have not found unconditional approval here in the United States. Le Fort expected this; she knows she is a Christian mystic and will not always be easily understood. Her books are for the very mature reader only. She revels in treating border-line

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problems of conscience. She does it with magnificent artistry, dramatic power, love of man's soul and destiny, love of country, clear, prophetic insight into contemporary history and the forces of life, with womanly intuition—baffling, exasperating, profound—never for the sake of entertaining or out of interest in historical facts but always *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Jappe succeeded in increasing our esteem for this great Catholic writer of Germany. Difficult of analysis is his and her term "Gottesferne." In a "Nachwort" Jappe indulges in meditations, religious in nature, which for a layman represent perilous paths in religious speculation. He refers to Le Fort's work as one "das uns zu zeigen vermag, in wie vielen Gestalten wir die Gottesferne erleiden und erleiden sollen." The *felix culpa* idea has to be handled with caution, even in novels.

Catholic University

PAUL G. GLIES

### An Original Bouquet

*An Anthology of Catholic Poets.* Edited by Sir Shane Leslie. Newman, \$3.00.

IN THE introduction, and again quoted on the jacket, is a statement by Sir Shane Leslie so disarming that it makes very difficult any criticism of this book: "The essence of Anthologies is personal. It is the literary equivalent to the Japanese art of arranging flowers. The Anthologist must choose to please himself alone. For that reason this is not an exhibition of the best specimens of the best authors." The editor remains true to his principles.

The anthology was first published in 1925 and ranges from Caedmon and Cynewulf down to today, from England and Ireland to America. More than a third of the space is devoted to the pre-Elizabethans, almost all of whom are easily included as Catholics since the editor's criterion is whether the authors died in communion with Rome.

The changes in the new edition are interesting, for Sir Shane took the opportunity "to omit a few of the original selections, but to add others," and especially to take advantage of the appearance of Louise Imogen Guiney's posthumous *Recusant Poets*. What then are the changes? Omitted are twelve pages devoted to Hawker, Mallock, Wilde, and Beardsley. Added are six pages largely from the recusants. Finally there are introduced two dozen pages of Chesterton, Belloc, and Baring.

The arrangement is roughly chronological, though some of the categories would seem a little unusual. We proceed from "Anglo-Saxon," "The Medieval," "The Elizabethans," "The Carolines," "The Classical," to "The Catholic Revival" (Newman, Faber, Patmore, Hopkins, Tabb, Thompson, and Benson), thence a trifle astonishingly to "The Holy Women," (Proctor, Probyn, King, Meynell, and Shorter). "The Holy Women" are followed by "The Irish" and then finally a group called "The Literary Movement," (Blunt, Dowson, Johnson, Belloc, Chesterton, and Baring). If one takes his key from the introduction, it would seem that surprise is one of the requisites for flower arrangements. Within the authors, the poems are arranged neither alphabetically nor chronologically, and it is not always easy to discern whether they are placed in order of preference in an ascending or descending order. But again the art of flower arrangement may furnish the principles involved.



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It does, at any rate, give Sir Shane an opportunity for some flamboyance in the introduction where he writes, for instance: "While genuine flowers of poetry from the meads of asphodels are not lacking, some pieces have been included as specimens for a hieratic herbarium." There is no mixed metaphor when he further comments, "Gerard Hopkins' poems remained hidden like violets, while his whole life became a passion-flower in the Jesuit Conservatory." Far more astonishing is the statement, "Hopkins became a Jesuit in Ireland," because only the last quarter of Hopkins' life as a Jesuit was actually spent in that country.

But probably the most interesting thing about Sir Shane's tastes are that only one very recent author (Belloc) is represented and that he feels that it is in the tomb of Alice Meynell that "the Catholic Muse must sleep awhile." If standards are very stringent, one can see why he refuses to include Padriac Colum, Roy Campbell, Sister Madeleva, Robert Lowell, or Thomas Merton. Yet one might justifiably ask whether they are not intrinsically as significant as John Bellenden, Sir Edward Sherburne, Alexander Geddes, or May Probyn, people he has reprinted. After all, some flowers are genuine while others are made of paper.

JOHN PICK

### Portrait of a Pastor

*La Flamme et le vent.* By Henri Herzfeld. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

IT WOULD be unjust to inflict on this novel a comparison with Bernanos' treatment of a similar theme. The temptation to make such a comparison is almost irresistible in view of the subtitle, *Journal d'un pasteur de campagne*, and in view of the protagonist's passing allusion to the priests of Bernanos. "Ah! les prêtres de Bernanos qui ont toujours quelque chose de surnaturel à dire!"

Perhaps the chief literary merit of this romanced diary (October 1947 to June 1948) is its atmosphere, the dreary, humdrum, routine atmosphere of life in a rural parish, punctuated by the changes of weather and season and the pastor's visits and ministrations to his faithful. In this atmosphere the Protestant minister of Lignie lives and works, prays, and wonders. He is unhappy because he is an intellectual; he thinks too much, in an environment where people have neither the time nor the inclination for the intellectual order. Gradually the country parish, instigated by a few who object to his sermons, league against their shepherd, who is on the point of leaving, when a personal tragedy brings him and his people together: the parishioners' opposition is crushed by the sudden, shocking death of Bernard, the pastor's nine-year-old son. "Et nous ne serons jamais plus pour vous le pasteur et sa dame venus d'ailleurs, mais ce couple malheureux dont la peine est un peu la vôtre."

There is much serious meditation recorded here, meditation on tremendous issues, and meditation that the pastor can share with no one. This little diary ponders big problems. The nature of religion, good and evil, wealth and poverty, the social question, and the function of the Church and of Christianity itself. The continual intrusion of human incidents keeps the book from being a volume of abstract meditations.

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In a lengthy commentary on the Book of Job, with an implicit parallel to the pastor's own situation, one paragraph sounds strikingly like a definition of humanism in the manner of Saint-Exupéry. These words bear a remarkable resemblance to a passage from *Terre des hommes*:

Lorsqu'un homme est perdu, la nuit, dans la montagne, et que le froid le saisit, le sommeil l'assaille et le tente par des rêves délicieux. S'il s'abandonne un instant, il oublie la nuit, le froid, la souffrance, la solitude: il s'endort et il meurt. Mais la dignité de l'homme, c'est de lutter jusqu'à l'extrême limite de ses forces pour rester lucide et pour vivre.

But the pastor's humanism is not a purely natural, anthropocentric attitude. He constantly recognizes the indispensable role that the reality of divine grace must play in human destinies. Readers who seek drama and intrigue in fiction will be disappointed with Herzfeld's novel. The reader who prefers fiction that can occasion examination of conscience and reflection on human problems and attitudes, fiction that deals with the engima of life itself, will read this Protestant pastor's notebook with profit, and he will read it more than once.

The minister of Lignie regrets that his people no longer read the Bible, and he is genuinely worried. For if Protestants abandoned the Bible, what would be left? On the other hand, he reflects, if Catholicism should return to the Bible, the results would be lamentable for Protestantism. Perhaps he should be reminded that Catholicism has not abandoned the Bible, that its liturgy draws generously from the Scriptures seven days a week?

The Baltimore Junior College

EUGENE F. MURPHY

### Shapt to Pleasure

*Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama.* By Madeleine Doran. University of Wisconsin. \$6.00.

**E**NDEAVORS of Art has a historical setting, but its preoccupations and point of view are timeless. Although its primary purpose is to define the achievements of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists by placing them in their working frame of artistic reference, the resulting interpretations of the plays can also be considered as demonstrations that art is habit and not speculative science. The book is not just another attempt at the imaginative recreation of some fragment of Renaissance culture, but it is an exploration of those forces which shaped the artistic habits of the dramatists. Shakespeare succeeded in subduing the "narrative and verbal copiousness" which so delighted his contemporaries by experiment and failure. His success can best be understood by proceeding from an understanding of his prudence to his theory as John Marston suggested in the Induction to *What You Will*.

Music and poetry were first approved  
By common sense; and that which pleased most  
Held most allowed pass: your rules of art  
Were shapt to pleasure, not pleasure to your rules.

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Miss Doran widens the context in which we can appreciate Shakespeare by relating his art form to the other art forms of the period. Adopting some suggestions from H. Wofflin's *Principles of Art History*, she demonstrates how Shakespeare's modes of artistic expression can be better understood as reflective of a form of imaginative beholding characteristic of all Renaissance art. Shakespearean tragedy implies the acceptance of an aesthetic of multiple unity. To interpret *Hamlet* through the imposition of the classical conception of unity is comparable to studying the Parthenon to appreciate Chartres. The sixteenth century viewed creation in all its "abundant variousness" and imitated the Book of the Creatures in the book of the play. The later reduction of the cosmos to unity through scientific hypotheses is still an obstacle to the appreciation of the art of the Renaissance.

How Shakespeare achieved his own unity in the midst of infinite riches is intelligible only in terms of the formal possibilities available to him. He had to face aesthetic and artistic problems which still retain their vitality. Shakespeare had his own solution for the conflict between eloquence of form and realism of information, art and morality, idealism and verisimilitude. Miss Doran achieves a view of Shakespearean art which preserves continuity with the Gothic and relationship with Giovanni di Paolo. The brash critic who deduces from classical standards will always conclude with Thomas Nashe that Elizabethan plays were frequently but "endeavors of Art." The Elizabethan accomplishment derides the critical method which is a perpetual obstacle to a renaissance of appreciation.

Boston College

P. ALBERT DUHAMEL

### Birds in Space

*Nos ombres qui cherchent.* By Renée Rivet. Paris: Seghers.

*Aurore Souterraine.* By Claude Vigée. Paris: Seghers.

LOST in the dark emptiness of a silent planet, in a timeless, immovable, suffocating atmosphere, orphaned, meaningless birds circle about the dried up, stiffened, branches of petrified trees. This is the world of Renée Rivet. The suggestion of three dimensional life is nonexistent. The moon is but a flat mask of frozen waves. The rivers reflect the sunken faces of dead puppets. In the distance the "temple of absence" sends out its icy winds and monotonous murmurings.

What can be the role of an immortal mortal wandering without companions in this desolate landscape? What can be the meaning of a human being in the merciless interstellar spaces? As in the cave of Plato, the wretched specimen of our race can see only the shadows of things. He, too, is dissolved into a world of make-believe and pretense—clouds and mirrors, clowns and mechanisms—sensing only the solitary litany of underground realities. The light is twisted and broken in his eyes and in his heart the wheels of love grind the insubstantial dust of misty longings in vain. The birds, only the birds, are alive in this haunted universe, migrating from an open wound to a menacing, enveloping sky; myriads of birds, and with them the painful procession of our existence receives and exhales a mysterious gravitation. One day, perhaps, the closed eyes of the "man in white" will clear and the sealed doors of things will speak as in dreams.

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In the meantime, poor, delicate Renée will wait with the rest of the surrealist pilgrims for the sun-up. Her sighs and nightmares, containing so many questions within the frail frame of these twenty poems, will accompany her inexorably during the next heavy phrases. You would like to offer some help? It is hopeless altogether. She says it so exactly:

Celui qui veut m'arrêter  
Ne retrouve que mon ombre.

Claude Vigée's volume, which also contains twenty poems, offers a striking contrast to the similarly conceived book of Renée Rivet. There is the woman's world, full of anxiety and unphilosophical one-track-mindedness. Here a man is speaking, one whose interests are broad and realistic, embracing Boston and Paris, Rilke and William Carlos Williams, spring and stars alike. He likes this globe of ours, the juicy oranges of California, the highways running through fresh-smelling woods, the universe that grows within ourselves, not only parallel to, but simultaneously and organically with the outside world.

Claude Vigée also mentions the birds, which are the only creatures of the feminine landscape. For him, however, the space contains a thousand other miracles. Besides the winged desires, he contemplates the exuberant real things, the roots that lift and move the rocks and re-create each year the magic of the seasons. Love itself becomes something positive in his healthy atmosphere, a power to open the gates of immured oriental cities, a confession in which two cosmic travelers mix the wine of past visions and memories.

The vocation of the poet is not a passive one. He appears on the horizon of mankind as a watchman to announce the dawn. The primeval darkness of the beginning changes within his soul to bright sunshine which inundates the surrounding night with clarity, hope, and the highest paroxysm of the spirit. Yes, Claude Vigée has "le grand cœur de l'homme":

Dans sa barque, tendu vers les terres humaines,  
ses bras d'algues cloués aux mâts du souvenir,  
le poète est passeur du feu de l'origine.

Our Lady of Victory College

GEORGE FERENCZY, S.O. CIST.

## Translating Lorca

*Federico Garcia Lorca: An Appreciation with Selected Translations of His Poetry.* By Roy Campbell. Yale \$2.50.

THIS is the first book as far as England is concerned, says Roy Campbell, in which Lorca is not used as a political symbol. Campbell should be commended for this excision and also for making available in English much information about Lorca and his place in the Spanish literary tradition.

But the reader should be warned of the chaff: pseudo-facts and half facts produced by Campbell's haste, carelessness of expression, and excessive generalization which abounds when he presents Spanish attitudes and literary history. In explaining Lorca he is more precise because he is concluding after having read Lorca at first hand. But his aesthetic generalizations are taken second hand from Spanish. In Spain there exists a special penchant for synthesis, a love of synthesis, like Campbell's, which exists without a corresponding love of ac-

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curacy and rigor of fact. On this soil not adequate analysis but repetition clothes the synthesis with authority. Campbell tries to make up in breeziness what is lacking in solidity. The result is often confusing and misleading. Consider the following paragraph:

When people speak about Spain being "backward" they are judging her by a very false standard indeed. When progress was an uphill business, Spain was always very much up in the lead. When it became a veritable break-neck, downward, Gadarene stampede, Spain proved she was equipped with not only a brake in the form of tradition, but a reverse-gear in the form of reaction; and that as far as she was concerned, "progress" was a matter of voluntary opinion. A body without reaction is a corpse: so is any social body without tradition. "Reactionary" Spain has, during this century, produced better poetry than any other country; and this is chiefly due to her preoccupation with spiritual necessities rather than immediate physical convenience.

The simplification here is excessive and deceptive. What is Campbell saying? When there was progress (16th century) Spain was in the lead. There is no more progress, so Spain — politically conscious and clever — has pulled the brake and sits "reacting." Yes, Campbell's progress is a "matter of voluntary opinion." But those to whom progress is a matter of fact and action, both physical and spiritual, might keep on calling this state of affairs described by Campbell — backward.

When Campbell states that "reactionary" Spain has produced "better poetry than any other country" during the century he has recourse again to this voluntary opinion to make a statement that some critics would not make. Spain has produced excellent poets in the twentieth century and it is not uncommon to hear Spaniards declare that these poets are better than any others . . . and from the same breath that Lope is greater than Shakespeare . . . Vox populi . . .

What is misleading in this paragraph is the ill-founded assumption that there is *one Spain*, this "progressive" Spain that looks backward as described in the first part of the passage. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century when the Benedictine, Father Feijóo, risked his skin in an attempt to shake Spain out of her sleep, the existence of two Spains has been evident. This breach widened in the nineteenth century. The twentieth has witnessed a head-on collision in a Civil War which, with the discovery of a common enemy, clouded rather than cleared an already existing confusion. To ignore the existence of two Spains is to deceive the reader. There can be no understanding of modern Spain if this fact is not kept in mind. Take the case of one of the foremost of Spanish poets, Antonio Machado. He certainly does not exist in this backward-progressive Spain described by Campbell and cannot be understood against that background.

When we approach Campbell as a translator of Lorca, we must recall that translation is by nature inadequate and imperfect, that of poetry especially so. At best one can only translate aspects of the original, in some cases only one aspect. The translations of Spender, Turnbull, and this reviewer have been added to show certain aspects of Lorca lost in Campbell's translation. These sixteen lines have been chosen at random from Lorca's long poem, "Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter," ("Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías").

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Por las gradas sube Ignacio  
con toda su muerte a cuestras.  
Buscaba el amanecer,  
y el amanecer no era.  
Busca su perfil seguro,  
y el sueño lo desorienta.  
Buscaba su hermoso cuerpo  
y encontró su sangre abierta.  
¡No me digáis que la vea!  
No quiero sentir el chorro  
cada vez con menos fuerza;  
ese chorro que ilumina  
los tendidos y se vuelca  
sobre la pana y el cuero  
de muchedumbre sedienta.  
¡Quién me grita que me asome!  
¡No me digáis que la vea!

Ignacio goes up the tiers  
carrying on his shoulders all his death.  
He sought for the dawn  
but dawn was no more.  
He seeks for his confident profile  
and the dream bewilders him.  
He sought for the beautiful body  
and encountered his opened blood.  
I will not see it!  
I do not want to hear it spurt  
each time with less strength  
that spurt that illuminates  
the tiers of seats, and spills  
over the corduroy and leather  
of a thirsty multitude  
Who cries that I should come near!  
Do not ask me to see it!

(Translation by Stephen Spender)

Into the stands he goes  
death heavy on his shoulders.  
He was searching for dawn,  
but dawn is gone.  
He searches for his firm profile,  
and the dream blurs it.  
He searched for his fine body,  
and touched spurting blood.  
Don't ask me to look!  
I can't bear to see that jet  
weaker and weaker,  
jet that lights up rows of seats  
and spills red over the corduroy and leather  
of a thirsting throng.  
Who calls me to come and look!  
Don't ask me to look!

With all his death born on his shoulders  
Ignacio ascends the tiers.  
He was looking for daybreak  
Where never break of day appears.  
He sought for his accustomed profile,  
But the dream baffled him instead.  
He looked to find his handsome body  
But found his blood was opened red.  
Don't ask me to look at it!  
I do not wish to smell the source  
That pumps each moment with less force,  
The stream that spills its crimson course  
Over the corduroy and leather  
Of the huge crowds that thirsting sit.  
Who shouts to me to have a look?  
Don't tell me I should look at it!  
(Translation of Roy Campbell)

Up the steps came Ignatius  
with all his death on his shoulders.  
He was searching for the dawn,  
and the dawn was not.  
He is seeking his firm profile,  
and in sleep he has lost it.  
He sought his beautiful body  
and he found his flowing blood.  
Do not ask me to see it!  
I do not wish to perceive  
its flowing each time with less  
force; that oozing stream that tinges  
the rows of seats and is spilling  
over the plush and leather  
of the thirsting multitude.  
Who calls to me that I come!  
Do not ask me to see it!  
(Translated by Eleanor Turnbull)

Before showing what is missing in Campbell's translation it might be well to state the fundamental assumption of this criticism: Campbell is translating for the man who knows no Spanish or whose Spanish does not reach Lorca for which reason he asks for a substitute, an equivalence of the original.

Campbell was probably chosen to translate Lorca because of his interest in Spain, not because of his style, which is in many respects an antithesis of Lorca's.

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If he had chastened his own style in the interest of fidelity to the original he might not have landed so far from the mark. But he chose to go his merry way and even compound it by supposing a similarity between the Spanish rhythm and the English ballad.

Certainly the ear that listened to Lorca would never think of choosing English ballad as a substitute for the Spanish. But you might come to the English ballad in this way: Lorca writes in *romance* meter; *romance* is translated by the English word *ballad*, ergo. . . . The English ballad and the Spanish *romance* do have a haunting folkloristic quality in common, but little else. The ballad is as far from the *romance* in other respects as the old anonymous Spanish *romance* is from the twentieth century *romance* of Lorca. In fact, a great portion of Lorca's fame rests upon his peculiar genius in revolutionizing the old *romance*.

The other translators attempt another equivalence, more direct and closer to Lorca. They listen to the quality of his verse in Spanish and try to find a twentieth century style for this twentieth century poet. (The break between the centuries was effected earlier in Spanish poetry and it was a cleaner break than the one that occurred in English poetry.) They do not go in search of ready-made clothing because they know it can't be found; they realize the making lies in their own sartorial facility.

None of the translations here presented comes near the "last word" (the reviewer's is added to point to a possible path toward more swiftness and ease of movement). They do come closer to Lorca than Campbell does. But to be specific, what is Lorca and what is Campbell's relation to him?

The Lorca you hear in this passage is eminently classical in this sense: *with the least possible turn* what would be, out of context, the most worn out, trite phraseology (there is not one word that would not be used many times daily in the most ordinary conversation, in talking to the cat, for instance) becomes distinguished speech. Fundamentally responsible for this crucial turn is Lorca's refined rhythmical sense. His poem has the well controlled, fine line, the intensity, conciseness, and swiftness you find in the most distinguished Spanish poetry, in St. John of the Cross or Manrique's *Coplas*, for instance. There are no moments of wavering and indecision. Lorca also calls upon assonance to effect this least possible turn that distinguishes his concentrated speech from ordinary prose. Assonance rounds the edges slightly, makes the flow easier, and adds thereby to the feeling of lightness and swiftness, to the elegance of the poem.

Now Campbell's translation is not swift and concise but heavy and sprawling. An equally heavy full rhyme explodes in the poem leaving almost unsurmountable bumps which fail to fulfill the most important function of rhyme, that of the graceful joint. Lorca's unobtrusive assonance comes over into Campbell's English in screeching brakes. English full rhyme as it is used by Campbell sounds too old-fashioned. It cannot be used today to translate the assonance of a language like Spanish that has only about one third of the vowel sounds of English. Lorca's musical memory belongs exclusively to the twentieth century; Campbell's to the nineteenth. Snatches of music, from the nineteenth century poets especially, surge where they have no reason to be. The reader is distracted by trying to place the tune. Sometimes he has the feeling of an orchestra, without a director, gone slightly mad, with one instrument trying to outplay the other.



## RENASCENCE

### The lines

I do not wish to smell that source  
That pumps each moment with less force

remind the reader very much of Longfellow's botched version of Manrique's *Coplas*, especially in the cancellation and substitution of images. The verb *sentir* which Campbell translates by *smell* means *to feel*, but can be translated by a word denoting a specific sense, to smell, for instance, if the context warrants this specification. Here it does not. This sudden incursion of the sense of smell distracts the reader and sends the poem momentarily spinning out of its orbit. And this is Campbell's usual tendency, addition or subtraction, rather than omission. Campbell is one of Baroja's heroes. He is not in love with the elegant, the fine, the transparent, but with the gusty, almost swashbuckling. For this reason there is an immense field of Spanish poetry, in which Lorca's is included, that lies outside his reach.

Catholic University

MARGARET BATES

### Message of Heroism

*Vers un héroïsme intégral dans la lignée de Péguy.* By Rosemary Goldie. Preface by Albert Béguin. Paris: Cahiers. Editions de l'Amitié Charles Péguy.

MISS GOLDIE'S study is an act of faith in the spiritual vocation of contemporary France. Her survey of twentieth century literature reveals that "France's message transmitted by the *littérature héroïque* will remain essentially the message of an heroism of faith, of love and of joy; of the joy in fact of those who, though burdened by the Cross, await the Resurrection."

Nothing proves this more than the writings of those authors who followed in the footsteps of Péguy: Psichari, Léon Bloy, Alain-Fournier, Bernanos, and especially Paul Claudel. Heroism, according to them, is: "a reasonable voluntary and joyful self-sacrifice;" "the triumph of a duty at first personal, then patriotic, moral, and finally religious"; its highest type, personal sanctity: "l'héroïsme intégral."

How different, by contrast, the concept of that French contemporary school of heroism, the Nietzschean school. According to the latter, heroism is divorced from moral considerations, is based on the desire to be supermen and stems from the will to be godlike; "volonté de déité" as Malraux calls it. No longer are charity and love the inspiration of sacrifice. Pride, self-adulation, self-glorification determine one's actions. What else is the meaning of Gide's heroism of sincerity, Maurras' heroism of action, Montherlant's heroism of physical risk, Valéry's cult of poetic self-expression, Sartre's solitude, Camus' bold stoicism, and Malraux's "condition humaine"?

Are despair, selfishness, egotism better incentives to a fuller life than faith, hope, and charity? French tradition provides the answer. From the *Song of Roland*, through Corneille's *Cid* and Péguy's *Joan of Arc* there is but one heroism worthy of the name "héroïsme à la française." And it is the one personified at three great moments of French history: the Crusades, the *Grand Siècle*, and contemporary France.

To have succeeded in covering so vast and difficult a subject in 123 pages,



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and to have ably analyzed briefly a score of authors is a convincing proof of Miss Goldie's understanding of the French mind. Albert Béguin's praise in the preface testifies to the quality of her investigation.

Georgetown University

LEO MAYNARD BELLEROSE

### Paradise of Pride

*De la Grandeur.* By Marcel Jouhandeau. Paris: Grasset.

*L'Imposteur.* By Marcel Jouhandeau. Paris: Grasset.

*Eloge de la Volupté.* By Marcel Jouhandeau. Paris: Gallimard.

THE WORK of Marcel Jouhandeau has been back in the news for several months. This writer, filled with high ideas and an exasperating pettiness, capable of mystic flights and household quarrels, in sum filled with contradictions, has become a target for vehement attacks by the *Osservatore Romano*. One of last spring's issues of the Vatican newspaper described him as "the enemy of God":

"For years, by the professed denial of true love and the glorification of vice, Jouhandeau has devoted his energy to the sale not so much of evil, but of the very essence of evil, of its roots and its definitive formulae. He is the alchemist of evil. Jouhandeau wishes Hell, and says so openly."

M. Jouhandeau's literary production is now of gigantic proportion. From year to year, this author deluges us with new works; the total number of his volumes has already passed seventy. And in these constant repetitions, these repeated themes, it is possible to distinguish some dominant ideas in his work.

*De la Grandeur* is one in the series of the "moralizing" works of M. Jouhandeau. One of his first attempts in this genre was *M. Godeau intime* (1926). Among the sublime pages that we read in wonder, there are black flames of pride. We recoil in fright. This pride appears beyond measure, immense, shocking. Certain of the numerous paradoxes and theological confusions would make us smile, if the seriousness of the situation did not prevent such a reaction. What disorder in this head of genius!

I am the pendant of God, his second, the only redoubtable adversary He may have. God's Jouster for eternity, quite in the face of God, holds himself on his feet, in the hatred whose dialogue is still in spite of Him, in spite of me, a dialogue of love.

(*M. Godeau intime.*)

Another work in the same group, published eight years later, *Algèbre des Valeurs Morales*, appeared at first in the "cahiers" of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (1934), and was then presented by Gallimard as a single volume (1935). M. Godeau, who still calls himself a Christian, ventures more deeply into the forests of theology. The idea of the grandeur of his soul becomes an obsession for him. This grandeur reaches the point of becoming a detriment to the grandeur of God. M. Jouhandeau reveals himself as a weaker and weaker, bolder and bolder theologian. Consider: God created the soul free and immortal, prerogatives that the soul may employ against its Creator by eternally refusing itself to Him. Now, this refusal, in Jouhandeau's thought, inflicts an eternal torment on God:

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The gift that You have made to me of myself, I would say, of disposing of myself for eternity, even against You, intoxicates me with admiration for myself and for You . . . Lord, You are my pride.

This idolatry of one's self, so filled with pride, becomes so intolerable and excessive in *De la Grandeur* that it really borders upon the ridiculous. The effect that Jouhandeau would wish to obtain turns to the contrary:

Why would Hell not be a Paradise preferable to the other? The paradise of my Pride, from which certain delights would not be excluded . . . What is Hell for God, would this not be Paradise for me?

(*De la Grandeur.*)

What constitutes my grandeur is that I can reach God even in Himself, in his Omnipotence. He can do all things, except constrain me and annihilate me. If I flee from Him, He loses in me a part of His Empire, perhaps the preferred part, the most secluded oak in His Secret Garden.

(*Ibid.*)

Free and immortal man . . . finds himself resisting Him eternally. So it would depend only on the privileged Creature that we are to make the Creation fail and to steal from Heaven something of its glory.

(*Ibid.*)

It would evidently be too easy a solution to cast aside all of Jouhandeau's work and to declare that he knows nothing of theology. No, the basis of his reasoning is completely Catholic. The human soul is effectively free and immortal. A soul, having grace, is marvelous with beauty and grandeur. But the conclusions that Jouhandeau draws from these premises are entirely false. In effect: man and the human soul are nothing without God, and there exists nothing outside of God which would not have been before *in* God. All our qualities—thus all our grandeur too—are only the participation in the infinitely perfect qualities of God. We are in an absolute and continuous dependence before God. Even a condemned soul can take nothing from His glory: on the contrary, it contributes to His glory by bringing to light the infinite Justice of God.

All this world, laboriously constructed by M. Godeau, crumbles; his pride loses all its sense before the reasonings of the theologian or the philosopher. God cannot be humiliated by M. Godeau. ("The story of my sins will be the chapter of God's humiliations.") *Deus non est passibilis*, He lives in His infinite Happiness, and neither M. Godeau nor all the Creation can reach Him there. He is beyond our categories and is sufficient unto Himself. As for His glory, it is infinite and no one can add anything to it.

All this is evidence that, with Marcel Jouhandeau, there is a fundamental unrest, a painful dissatisfaction. He wishes to speak man to man to God; he glorifies in the poor qualities he received from God; but, behind these preoccupations, you may sense the emptiness, the painful absence of Love. And who could speak well of God without love, of God who is Love? The Jouhandellian depths are cold, terribly cold, and at the end of a few volumes—or even before—you find yourself tired, sad, upset.

*L'Imposteur* (1951) is of another sort and could be placed in the series to which belong *M. Godeau marié* (1933), *Chroniques maritales* (1938) and *Nou-*

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*velles Chroniques maritales* (1943). This time the central theme is independence. The book is a ferocious inquest of marriage, a tragi-comedy of conjugal life. M. Godeau is enclosed in the bonds of his marriage, and, turning and turning like the squirrel in his cage, he sees himself baffled, humiliated, and chained. He wildly and vainly defends his liberty and his independence against Elise: she invades all. Neither will yield. Everything in him is contrary to what is in her; all that is within her is contrary to him. As for peace, it cannot be a pertinent issue here. She runs the household, broom or dust rag in hand, a pious canticle on her lips, when he would wish to work; he begins to write during the night or at dawn when she would like to rest. She scatters the pages of his manuscripts and destroys his photos—out of cussedness, says M. Godeau. And he speaks of suicide, of separation, but he stays and sinks deeper and deeper into his "Hell."

All the manifestations of this extraordinary household are excessive and contradictory: by turn it is Elise's jealousy, then her mystic flight; we listen to the declarations of grandeur and dignity from M. Godeau. Then we are present at the shabby family fights. Suspicions, misunderstandings, jealousy, pride, hateful ridicule. It is infernal. Who will question my refusal to believe in the "mystic" and in the "high spirituality" of such books? It is of no use that M. Jouhandeau throws in your face a few fine sentences about the sacrament of marriage; you are no longer duped, or you will find only irony in the affair. After a few dozen pages your gorge rises, and anguish and sadness seize you by the throat. Your ears ring from this avalanche of pathetic and sublime words: Glory, Grandeur, Soul, Liberty, Dignity, Esteem. But, assuredly, you don't believe a word of it, really.

Why does not M. Godeau admit openly his essential egoism which is so surrounded by such thick walls? Why does he not try to find the solution in humility and true love? The tragedy of the *Imposteur* is that he is incapable of it.

*L'Eloge de la Volupté* (1950) reveals a third and no less tormented side of Marcel Jouhandeau. This book also comes from a long line of works: *L'Eloge de l'Imprudence* (1932), *De l'Abjection* (1939), and the *Carnets de Don Juan* (1946) have the same preoccupations as this latest volume.

M. Godeau—is there need of saying that he is Jouhandeau?—after having discovered grandeur, believes he can resist God in glorifying his "moi" above all.

But there is no possible respite along this path. We are therefore witness to a whole series of books where this theme is exploited, repeated, and then exploited again. But there is one more step: evil appears. Since this evil hinders M. Godeau from being united to God, he pretends to have *chosen it freely*. Piteous lie of vanity, humiliated by successive falls. His "doctrine" is "affirmed": to escape mediocrity, he must be great in evil, by reason of being incapable of being great in what is good. M. Jouhandeau therefore becomes the apologist of evil. He goes about the task of glorifying voluptuousness and obscenity, pride, and egoism:

Evil had still its duty, which was to be beautiful . . . Beauty reigned over good and evil. Imperfection was more a fault than evil.

(M. Godeau *intime*.)

So he presents evil—which is something purely negative—as a positive value. In his thought, it is better to be the damned whose Hell might be wil-

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fully chosen than the soul without passion that owes its place in Paradise to its simple insignificance. It is necessary, he says, to have as much heroism for evil as for good, if not more. For it is easier to be good than bad. In *De l'Abjection*, he writes, "In being impure there may be a grandeur equal to that of being pure." It is easy to perceive the utter falsity of reasoning like this. How did M. Godeau arrive at this position? By a taste for risk and a conception of courage that are entirely false. In *Amateur d'Imprudences*:

I do not understand vice if it has no relationship with virtue, nor virtue if it is alien to vice. The only Drama which interests me is the one that smacks of Evil and Good. But I have no preference either for Good or for Evil, if I love only courage.

After such ideas, we are not at all surprised at the declarations of *Eloge de la Volupté*. We even expected them. In fact, Jouhandeau offers us nothing new in this volume:

Voluptuousness makes a sort of incomparable mausoleum of our body, whose glory is sensible only to us alone, but from afar the dearest, even if it had to be paid for with all the scorn in the world.

There is in voluptuousness something positively, directly, and inexhaustibly divine.

I wish to see God reduced to punishment opposite myself who turn about on a bed of roses.

In describing actions as "pure" and "impure," as gratuitously as the Jews do the animals, Christianity has spoiled everything.

What is my conclusion? Do I withdraw all my esteem? No. Marcel Jouhandeau has not yet finished his career. He may still astonish us. But let one no longer say to us that he is a Catholic and mystic writer. Pride was never a Christian virtue, and it will never be by the glorification of vice and sin that you will recognize a Catholic author. If he suffers from his "mal," it is not in glorifying it that he will be delivered from it. If he feels himself culpable, it is not by putting himself in Hell, while still alive, that he will obtain the pardon. One must choose between the homage of men and of God; it is difficult if not impossible to have them both at once.

Marquette University

RALPH MARCH, S. O. CIST.  
Tr. SPIRE PITOU

### Animal, Vegetable, Mineral

*Hélène, ou le règne végétal.* By René-Guy Cadou. Paris: Seghers.

*Les biens de ce monde.* By René-Guy Cadou. Paris: Seghers.

THE real world—the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms—arouses for the senses numberless images, thoughts, and reactions, sordid or pure, violent or submissive, disturbing or palliative. For René-Guy Cadou, the kingdoms are his lifeblood:

Et quand il s'agissait de faire le partage  
Du blé des fruits de l'eau du ciel et des gazons  
Je leur offrais mon sang qu'ils aient davantage.

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In "Refuge pour des oiseaux," he opens his breast to the birds with a joy far removed from Musset's image of the pelican:

Entrez, n'hésitez pas c'est ici ma poitrine  
Beaux oiseaux vous êtes la verroterie fine  
De mon sang je vous veux sur mes mains  
Logés dans mes poumons parmi l'odeur du thyn  
Dressés sur le perchoir délicat de mes lèvres  
Vous dormirez contre ma joue les têtes folles  
Pourront bien s'enivrer des raisins de mon cœur.

René-Guy Cadou is waiting for the day when the three kingdoms will become reconciled with each other and with their Creator ("Je me situe toujours très mal dans cette vie"), the day when all men will, in their hearts, "croire dans la vie plus qu'en l'éternité," the day when, in the spirit of Francis Jammes, he will go up into heaven with an escort of "la caille, la perdrix et canard sauvage." Meanwhile, Cadou seeks the definition of life in nature. The odor of lilies and mimosa, the proud horses, the "filets bleus de la lumière" are the only creations capable of inspiring love, beauty, and sympathy in the face of sorrow, death, and fear.

Cadou has identified the vegetable kingdom with his beloved Héléne, so his poetic conversations are shared indiscriminately with the woman he loves and the countryside, the flowers, the marine plants, and the first fruits of the season—the lips of Héléne. The animal kingdom depends on the vegetable kingdom, and there is a perfect love between them:

Les chevaux de l'amour me parlent de rencontres  
Qu'ils font en revenant par des chemins déserts  
Une femme inconnue les arrête et les baigne  
D'un regard douloureux tout chargé de forêts;

the vegetable kingdom is in turn dependent on the mineral kingdom, and drinks the streams and turns them into "tendres ruisseaux de sève végétale," which in its cycle becomes Héléne again:

. . . toi que  
Je portais déjà sur mes épaules  
Comme une douce pluie qui ne sèche jamais.

Living among these warm, inviting faces of nature, Cadou is obsessed by the appearance of "les visages de solitude," "faces of the earth whose weight I know of soot, of soft wax and of dead leaves"—aspects of his own countenance when he is enclosed within walls, out of contact with his beloved living animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. The farther from Nature, the closer does Cadou find himself to "le froment noir le sel amer et l'illusion" of the fourth group of poems: "Le Diable et son train." Some of the stanzas of these poems are pure expressions of nausea—combinations of images and sounds that are clotted together with unwholesome grease of modern mechanisms—and of nostalgia—pictures of the poet's childhood, and his vivid regret for fellow-poets who have passed before him, in sharp contrast to the diabolic offerings of Paris and the still emptiness caused by Héléne's death and the anticipation of the death that seems to fill and await René-Guy Cadou, who died at the age of thirty-one.

## RENASCENCE

*Hélène, ou le règne végétal* closes with five poems to "Saint Antoine et Cie." They are couplets in the form of evangelical hymns. Of the patron saint of lost things, Cadou asks that he may find what the devil has taken from him; to the humble Saint Francis, the poet dedicates a humble but striking poem: Saint Francis comes alive in the form of a scarecrow:

Les brass en croix comme Jésus  
Mais point de pieds de mains non plus  
Le couronnant le dévorant  
Des oiseaux bleus des noirs des blancs.

As for Saint Thomas, René-Guy Cadou's claims to being a poet must be proven before the eyes of the skeptical saint. "Sainte Madeleine" paints in bold, swift strokes Simon's opinion of the sinner-saint:

N'ai jamais vu telle servante  
Avoir le cœur si près du venture . . .

and Christ's insight into her character. And finally the supreme "Visage" of all of René-Guy Cadou's "visages" appears within the heart of a modern Saint Veronica.

*Hélène, ou le règne végétal* is a collection of Cadou's best lyrics, and includes most of the poems which had appeared in 1951 in *Les biens de ce monde*. Also outstanding in *Les biens de ce monde* is "*Ce soir du 2 janvier*," a poem which may be dated since it recalls the war, but whose images are not to be forgotten. René-Guy Cadou's beloved countryside now resembles

. . . une vieille demure  
Pleine de plâtres et de tapisseries écorchées  
Avec une flaque de sang sur le plancher  
Et sur le coin de la cheminée de marbre Empire  
Une pomme rouge éclatée comme une tirelire.

The alcohol flame of the lamp in the train station is what the poet imagines a Creole's heart must be like.

The ability of the poet to bring alive a dwelling, its furniture, and all the inanimate objects that decorate it, is beautifully expressed by Cadou throughout the entire poem "Celui qui entre par hasard" and in "Chambre d'hiver":

Des mille chambres où j'ai vécu  
La plus belle était un violon . . .

In one of his longer poems, "Nocturne," Cadou delivers a humble and stirring monologue in the presence of God. "Now that the only trains that leave no longer assure connections for all those small, shadowy stations on the line of suffering," the poet feels the necessity of coming closer to God, of begging forgiveness for his strange, individualistic faith which at least has not been lukewarm:

Si j'ai jeté des pierres dans vos vitres  
C'est pour que me parvienne mieux votre Chant!

Cadou's prayer is that he may walk at the side of God and read his verse.

Columbia University

ALBA-MARIE FAZIA

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